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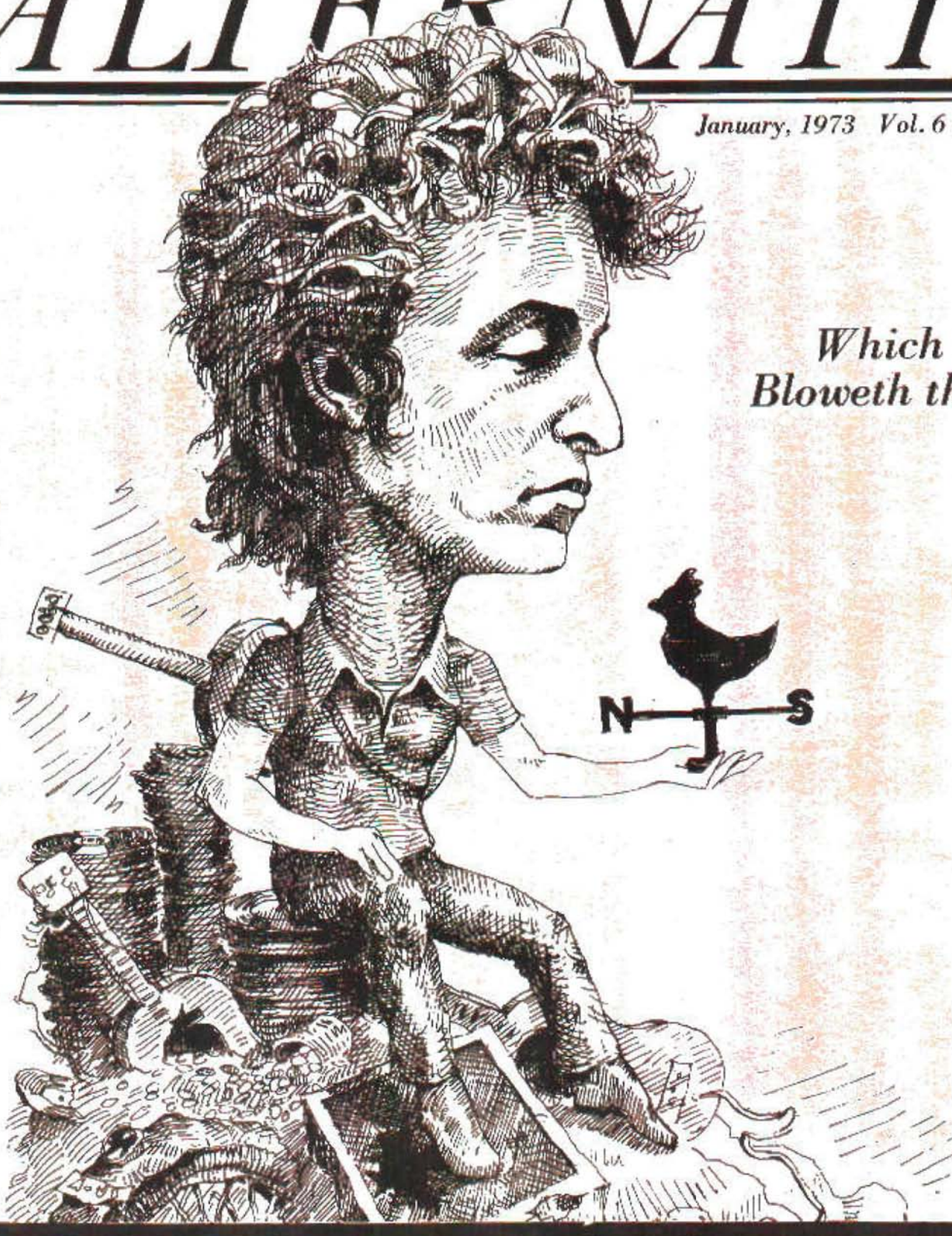

Which Way Bloweth the Wind?

Phillip Abbott Luce on

Dylan

Plus Articles, Reviews, and the Usual Mischief

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the ALTERNATIVE

to bare the witness and the truth

DEPARTMENTS

The Continuing Crisis 2
Editorial I: R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. 3
Editorial II: George Nathan 3
The Public Discourse: Paul H. Weaver 4
The Great American Column: Roger Rosenblatt 7
Contributors 10
Letter from a Whig: C. Bascom Slemp 18
The Bootblack Stand: Letters to Plunkitt from Senator Tunney and George Romney 21
Correspondence: Letters from Enhamre, Boulware, Ward, Morrison, Mayfield, Windover, and Stanakowski ... 23
Current Wisdom: by Assorted Jackasses 26

ARTICLES

Wick Allison: Memoirs of an Insane Age 5
Nicholas Loniello: The Right Not to Vote 6
Charles A. Moser: On "Democratic Totalitarianism" 8
E.C. Pasour, Jr.: Information Aspects of Alternative Economic Systems 11

REVIEWS

Phillip Abbott Luce on *Doing Dylan is a Trip Unto Itself* 13
Ralph Raico on *Oh! Sex Education!* 14
John Shelton Reed on *The Peculiar Institution* 16
Alan Weinblatt on *Metaphors of Self* 19
David Brudnoy: Lap Dogs 22
Dan Joy on *The Political Culture of the United States* 24

Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed, or (most redundantly of all) national origin — and yes, sex, even sex.

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The Continuing Crisis

● Those "linguistic problems" that kept a Vietnamese settlement from Mr. Kissinger's hand just before the election persisted throughout November. On November 2 a band of excited Indians led by three ex-convicts captured the Bureau of Indian Affairs, caused over two million dollars of damage, made ten thousand dollars worth of long distance calls, and stole two rugs. The next day the German Democratic Republic announced plans to free some thirty thousand "political prisoners." The fate of the remaining eighteen million was not revealed, nevertheless on November 8 East and West Germany initialed a treaty designed to "normalize" relations. An irate client bit Mr. Sidney Krieger on the proboscis while he worked in his Gary, Indiana office.

● The Exorcism of Amerika was delayed four years when Mr. Nixon won 60.83 percent of the popular vote and 521 electoral votes in the presidential shouting match. Setting a precedent that begs for emulation the Resurrected Whig Party was the first to concede, making their announcement even before the polls closed. Senator McGovern was the last to concede. Despite Mr. Nixon's popularity his party lost two seats in the Senate and only gained thirteen in the House. The Society of American Magicians celebrated the forty-sixth anniversary of the death of Harry Houdini. Martin Borman was found and lost. Howard Hughes, Representative Boggs, and Representative Begich are still missing.

● On November 8 the modern Metternich, General Idi Amin, went to the Ugandan aerodrome to bid farewell to the last of the 50,000 lucky Asians he had ordered expelled from paradise. Mr. Ezra Pound died as did the Hon. Martin Dies, and Dr. Timothy Leary was granted permission to remain "indefinitely" in Switzerland. Jane Fonda complains that there is a bleeping coming from her television set.

● Mrs. Jean Westwood, the forty-eight year-old mink farmer, chosen by Senator McGovern to be Democratic National Chairman, may be given an early retirement. It was not an auspicious month for political prisoners. Richard Speck was resentenced to 1,200 years imprisonment. James Earl Ray's pleas for a new trial were ignored. And the J.P. Morgan of crime, Meyer Lansky, was shipped to the United States. In politics one hundred beautifully dressed homosexuals demonstrated in New York *against* police abuses. In Baltimore Joseph Acanfora III says he will take his battle to the courts rather than allow the Montgomery County Board of Education to shift him from his job as

(continued on page 27)

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Editorial I:

Apathy: A Reappraisal

From the *New York Times* I see that somewhere on the eastern seaboard recently there gathered a group of America's most illustrious intellectuals to hand down their prophesies on what America will be like for the next few years. I do not recall the names of these worthies, but I do recall that they were in solemn accord as to our immediate situation. After running their hands over the bumps and ridges of what they consider to be the nation's skull they all agreed that we are in for a period of woe, variously described as apathy, moral lassitude, torpor, and so forth — grim tidings for us all. The bad news swept into the editorial offices of the *New York Times* like a blight. Everyone put their finger-paints away, held hands, and trembled. Calamity was upon the New York publishing tycoons. The Bernsteins might never throw another cocktail party ever again. Apathy, that infamous crippler of Good Causes, had come out of the hell holes of Dubuque to suffuse the Republic and swat the New Age in its prime. The Rotary triumphs!

So the career moralists, the wowsers of Aquarius, Radical Chic, and all the other daft relicts of Puritanism are going to take to the bread lines. So what? Let the penthouses revolutionaries moan as they will, I consider the revival of apathy a stupendous blessing. Apathy reigns at the top of my chart of preferred values and democratic virtues. When I heard the sweet news of its resurrection, my bartender's business doubled, and I laid in a copious supply of cheap champagne. Apathy will make the country grow. Good riddance to the nuisances.

There are acres of good things that can be said about apathy. For one, it seems to annoy all the right people. Anything that ages the New Left, or whatever it calls itself these days, deserves a good word and encores. But apathy, to be admired in its fullness, must be percipiently grasped, so we must understand what exactly the wowsers fear America has become apathetic about. Have Americans become apathetic about a more lush Gross National Product? Are Americans indifferent to good cheer, beautiful women, butterflies, serenity, and fresh fruit? Not at all. That which has driven the Brothers Berrigan to their frozen chambers and has induced Jason Epstein to go into the tin pan business is nothing other than the appalling realization that a prodigious majority of Americans no longer shares their enthusiasms, their enthusiams for gloom, uplift, and crash experiments at the expense of the other fellow's comfort. It means that Americans have tired of their blowzy acts of charlatanry and are turning to old movies and football. It means all of us are not going to goose-step together and that Pius George is not going to lead us out of Vietnam and into the fire. Simply stated it means that Americans are indifferent to the much heralded New Age; precisely stated it means much more. For the exegesis of apathy in the particular context in which it is used today, we must trudge off to the OED and to Kenneth Minogue, the wise and apathetic political theorist.

To be apathetic is to be insensitive to suffering, says the OED. And according to Mr. Minogue the crowd over at *The New York Review of Books* suffers quite a lot over just about everything. The reincarnated Puritan is possessed of a standardized sensibility leaving him dissatisfied with the world because it contains suffering—a sad situation if ever there was one. He is possessed of this standardized sensibility because he sees politics as a technique for pursuing long term social objectives. His fondest aspiration, his life ambition, is to arrange society so as to ensure a certain moral behavior. When politics is apprehended in this way, that is to say as a technical activity, one must adhere to some sort of standardized sensibility embracing all of society. The result of this abstruse process is that our mod Puritan decides what he requires of society, and organizes society in such a way as to realize his objectives. Thus, Puritan Chic politicizes life right down to its most private intimacies. When that awesome group of prophets got together and revealed that America was in for a debauche of apathy, they meant that Americans are indifferent to about everything that matters to them. Americans are indifferent to one of the most comprehensive spooneries of all time: the notion of standardized suffering. Puritan Chic believes that suffering is everywhere and so Americans must be indifferent to everything.

Well ta, ta. As I see it that does not make America quite the ghastly place that Puritan Chic would make it out to be. I do not see Americans as particularly indifferent to suffering. I see Americans as indifferent to moral totalitarians. I see Americans as insensitive to the wowsers, to all their dizzying plans for rearranging society, and to using politics as a yoke on free men.

Understood in this way, then, apathy is a very good portent. Apathy is a rejection of the comprehensive view of politics held by the busybodies who have been burning to launch us into new priorities and the glories of "fundamental change." Apathy means that Americans sniff at the New Age.

And this was deliciously proved in the recent shouting match. The citizenry did not give Mr. Nixon an overwhelming mandate, they gave Pius George a bop on the snoot. The polls never showed Mr. Nixon as a popular messiah until he was paired with the candidate of Puritan Chic. Then he came off looking like the new Roosevelt, but in other races the plain folk of the Republic pulled about the same levers they always pull. If this be apathy, I prefer it to the oily, all-embracing rhetoric of the New Age. Indeed we need more of it.

Commitment and high purpose is what got us into Vietnam. It is what sustained the national draft. It is what has turned vast reaches of our urban paradises into franchized slums, abounding with boodle for the visionaries of city hall and misery for the poor. The national epidemic of idealism that recently reran its course through the universities left many of them on the brink of well deserved bankruptcies. Most of the great universities of the land are now practically indistinguishable from insane asylums and what passes for learning in the lesser institutions could better be carried on in mud puddles.

I can hardly think of a period in American history when a large dose of apathy would not have served the commonweal handsomely. Would we have suffered the absurdity of Prohibition if the majority of Americans had merely snickered at the idealistic whoops of the WCTU? Would the Bill of Rights have been defiled and anti-communism have fallen upon such hard times if Senator McCarthy had been accorded snores? What is more, would the nation have been afflicted by such windy frauds as Huey Long, Henry Wallace, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Gloria Steinem, William Kunstler, Norman Mailer, vitamin C and patent medicines, organic foods and cybernetics, if the soporific winds of apathy had caressed the land?

Now of course I do not celebrate or enjoin a national commitment to apathy. That would be illogical and imprudent. If we all snoozed continuously the men of enthusiasms would have an easy time of it, and in no time we would be strapped with their latest obsession. But what I do say is that apathy deserves a reappraisal and an intelligent appreciation. It has its place in a robust democracy, and I think old James Madison had it in mind when he penned Federalist Fifty-One. Certain once fashionable frauds now talk about it as though it were a prelude to the Dark Ages. It is nothing of the sort. It is...*ah* Mr. McGovern, it is the fresh wind of change.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Editorial II:

Why I Voted for Richard M. Nixon

The choicest qualities which recommended Richard Nixon for another term were: his utter prosaism, his lack of any imaginable kind of glamour, and his inability to excite the faintest quiver of enthusiasm. An odd confection of ingredients you might say, but for me they rendered President Nixon irresistible. I take it as a sign of divine intervention that Richard Nixon is such a deeply uninspiring leader. In performing before the cameras, he is awkward and unconvincing. His press conferences have all the easy atmosphere of a public execution. He is vulnerable to almost any one of those cunningly triggered questions the newsmen lay for him; his wooden humor makes dogs howl, and even small

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children wince. Through all these years, no one has ever been able to put Mr. Nixon over on the press, the intellectuals, or the priggish hordes of suburban and university intellectualoids whose yearnings seem to be for the benign despotisms of the past. Stylistically Mr. Nixon is yuk.

But then so is the chief executive of almost any large corporation, and the gloomy fact is that our Republic has become the largest corporation of all. It needs a competent executive. If he flunks his screen tests, so what? Mr. James Roach, the recently retired chief executive of General Motors, always made excrutiatingly painful performances on television. But reasonable and knowledgeable persons do not expect corporation executives to answer questions gracefully or to make women swoon. It is more important that executives *ask* questions, the right questions, and pound tables if these questions are not answered. Mr. Nixon is competent at asking questions and pounding tables. He is the most competent executive available.

Now if America were a religion, Mr. McGovern would have had my vote. He is capable of moralizing under the most unusual circumstances, and he has convinced me that he worries about my spiritual well-being. I have become acquainted with his homilies, and they, in their quaintness, do not make me feel threatened. But Mr. McGovern as steward of a democratic republic is quite unthinkable. He is indistinguishable from the soapbox orators who used to unbosom themselves in Chicago's Bug House Square. His politics drift off towards the crackpot and the bizarre, leaving me to contemplate Mr. Nixon's policies.

The President has expeditiously moved to assure peace on a wider range than was ever anticipated. His concern for human travail seems genuine and only rarely is his realism about human possibilities vitiated by the kind of megalomania that drives governments to undertake the impossible. But most importantly he has proved his competence by directing the corporation through one of the most perilous periods in its history. He did it without whooping it up and disturbing the cows. He seems willing to leave us to our humors. If in the next four years he can trim down the corporation's overhead, fire the handful of petty fixers beneath him, and close down some of the inappropriate and unprofitable divisions, he may be judged one of the great executives of the century. But Americans must swear off the meretricious charms of glamour and religious quackery. They are all too dizzying and dangerous to democratic polity. Even moderate doses of the stuff bring on totalitarian hangovers.

George Nathan

Movements and Critics

Intellectuals are deservedly famous for being steadfast advocates of progressive ideals. What is less widely acknowledged is that they are also the most volatile and reactionary element in modern political society. This is so for the obvious but often neglected reason that the usual vehicle for the intellectual's pursuit of his progressive ideology is not the party or the interest group, but the oppositional political movement.

Intellectuals' politics are volatile because movements are volatile. A movement is characterized by the absence of structure, formal leadership, or settled goals, and this makes it inherently subject to rapid shifts and changes, especially in a radical direction. It is also in the nature of movements to be, or become, reactionary. A movement is not a movement, after all, unless its adherents exhibit ideological uniformity. The effort to create and sustain such uniformity inevitably makes members of movements hostile to freedom, diversity, and civility. Moreover, as movements adopt ever more extreme positions, this same insistence on comformity forces them into an ever more resolute denial of reason, intellectual honesty, and humane values. To be sure, every movement worth its salt will be found marching under the banner of progressive goals and speaking the rhetoric of social justice. These goals and that rhetoric are a reality. But a second and coequal reality is that, regardless of its goals, a movement is a movement, and as such possesses an animus against freedom, diversity, civility, reason, honesty, and maturity. Such an animus is the very definition of political reaction.

Periodically, the modern world has been disrupted by movements of this paradoxical variety, and the intellectual community has usually enlisted itself enthusiastically for the duration, with all the predictable, disastrous results for standards of discourse for the intellectual life of the whole. But alongside this pattern, a second, countervailing tendency is also discernable. For whenever movements have flourished, so too have small but influential countermovements, made up of intellectuals who have chosen to resist the *zeitgeist* and who oppose the most reactionary excesses. In doing so, these resisters, whom Peter Steinfels has termed the "counter intellectuals," have seldom made themselves popular. But they have undeniably leaned against the winds of fashionable reaction; they have made their voices heard; and in the process they have produced some of the most brilliant social criticism and many of the most luminous and enduring defenses of humane values to be found in western literature. Thus, the dialectic of movements and their critics.

At any given point in time, the battle between a movement and its critics seems absurdly one-sided. In a movement's nascency, as its ethos is forged and its first leaders appear, the movement is vastly outnumbered, and its voices are drowned out by a critical chorus of dismissal and derision. Later on, when a movement begins to flourish and approaches the peak of its influence, it is usually the critics who are hopelessly in the minority, at least in the intellectual community, and it is not without reason that they often feel themselves to be voices crying in the wilderness. They discover that their writings, when not disregarded altogether, are received as ill-tempered, ill-informed, simplistic potboilers reflecting only irrational hostility, and unaccountable perversity or some kind of self-interest. Later still, however, after the movement has died out or been destroyed (usually by its own excesses rather than through the power of its critics), it is again the critics who prevail. Their books are widely read and sighted as models of humane clarity, and their lives are admired for their qualities of courage and prescience, and the once-popular leaders and doctrines of the movement against which they tilted are dismissed without a thought.

This dialectic between movements and critics also has a substantive aspect. In their early stages, movements tend to be reformist in character: they identify specific problems and injustices and press for specific redress. At this stage, the critic tends to adopt the somewhat philistine stance of pooh-poohing the notion that there is a serious problem or that anything should be done about it. The movement sometimes then begins to grow. More and more people begin to enlist their sympathy in support of the reformist definition of the problem—and in reaction against the early critics' insensitivity to it. At the same time, however, the leaders of the movement become more extreme, and the definition of the problem becomes ever more sweeping. From having been a specific problem with a specific solution, it becomes a problem inherent in the socio-political system that can be solved only by revolution — and from there it may be further redefined as a problem inherent in life as we know it, so that the solution is nothing less than a recreation of man

(continued on page 21)

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the ALTERNATIVE January 1973

Wick Allison

Memoirs of an Insane Age

The year is measured in semesters.

On the first day of the springs semester, my last semester, I arrived on campus at a comfortable hour and strolled over to the Journalism Building, the one with "veritas vincit omnia" carved in block letters on the concrete staircase leading to the front doors. "Veritas vincit omnia" is bad syntax, but since the occupants of this building were known for their flagrant disregard for syntax and grammar in English, I don't suppose anyone ever bothered about it in Latin.

Inside, shaking my head at the pious inaccuracy of the quotation, I rounded a corner to the left, avoided a collision with a *Daily Texan* reporter interviewing himself, and entered the familiar cluttered precincts of the magazine office. The minute I walked in my heart sank.

Seated at his stool bent over his old accountant's desk was my Nemesis, my Waterloo. We editors called him The Creep, which is more a biological classification than a name. He was actually paid by the university to run errands for the magazine's manager.

I made my way to the composing table with a carefully rehearsed indifference to his existence, sat down at my usual chair, and began poring studiously over the latest issue of the *Texan*. Through the uppermost corner of my right eye I saw T.C. turn and give me his most piercing glower. I knew the hour of madness was at hand. And, God help me, I was all alone. I began peeking around the edges of the paper for a possible weapon.

T.C. fits — the present tense indicating that he still does, if he's still alive, a question which has never bothered me — he fits my ideal image of the successful comic book cartoonist. His red beard, blazing eyes, flushed though barely visible cheeks. His short height. His pointed teeth, and his posture when bent over the accountant's desk. T.C. could have been putting the finishing touches on next month's Daffy Duck series. Instead he was glaring at me and about to speak.

"You're trying to destroy me!"

The screech nearly jolted me from my chair. I knew perfectly well what caused it. I had suggested in a meeting earlier in the week that the funds spent on our errand-runner might be better used to pay our starving student writers.

"What?" I asked innocently, with my harried professor's interrupted look.

"YOU'RE TRYING TO DESTROY ME!"

His sharp teeth glistened, and I could see down his throat where the tonsils were swelling. I returned to my newspaper, but the printed words were blurred into black streaks. My hands were quivering, my nerves taut. I was prepared for the assault.

T.C. grabbed a Coke bottle. I began to look frantically for a weapon. Swirling thoughts of the courtroom scene bellowed in my mind. No jury in the world would. . .

T.C. took a healthy swig from the Coke bottle and stalked out of the room. I sighed audibly. I understood the portent of the scene; my last semester at the university, and I was surrounded by madmen. T.C. was only one of them, though more honest than the rest. He didn't pretend to be sane.

The others did. In fact, the others were the most pretentious pretenders I have ever encountered. Madness was in the air that spring, and I was one of the few who had not tasted it, although I couldn't avoid the odor of its presence.

We few sane ones did what we could to shore up each other's flagging courage. Bartlett, eminently practical and stalwartly provincial, would drop by the magazine office to laugh uproariously over the day's editorials in the *Texan*, the curious ramblings of our colleagues down the hall. Bartlett had risen by the sweat of his brow from that favorite of all sociologists' muddles, the lower classes — and he wasn't too pleased by the sudden affection expressed by these long-haired, solidly bourgeois students for the poor, the blacks, the Indians, the dispossessed. As he liked to point out, patronizing affection was a sure signal of social contempt. I often thought his laughter was a bit forced, but we welcomed it nevertheless.

Atkinson, tiredly skeptical and our best wit, would push a beer in my direction and launch into one of his remarkable imitations of the latest campus heroes, reducing their sizeable buffoonery to manageable limits. Atkinson was an inexplicable paradox to our brethren down the hall. His hair was long, and his clothes were both ragged and stylish, the ultimate in radical apparel. He was often mistaken for one of Them, which gave him a sort of devilish pleasure. He would only add to the confusion by strumming his guitar and reciting Ginsberg.

When matters got really out of hand, I would practice syllogisms and other exercises in logic, sometimes aloud before gathered friends, like a banned priest reciting whispered secrets of salvation. We survived that last semester at an American university, but only by the slimmest of margins.

II

It was the year of Cambodia and Kent State. A year of burnings and marches, bombings and rallies. Higher education in America, which in the best of times proceeds at a snail's pace, came to a grinding halt. The much-proclaimed "end of ideology" was forgotten. This was the biggest year for ideology since 1917. A boom year for sloganeers and poster printers.

I recently read an article by an eminent conservative scholar reflecting on that incredible period. He demanded to know why no students stood up to defend civilized order during the great onslaught of 1970. During that year the eminent conservative scholar must have been in Afghanistan; he was certainly nowhere near an American university.

That was no year for reasoned resistance; to oppose the raging tide was to throw yourself at the mercy of the hurricane. No, we few who remained sane did so only through our cowardice. A minor argument now and then, yes. When things got out of hand, perhaps a sarcastic diatribe in the *Texan* or the magazine. But opposition? The word was meaningless. We gathered in small groups for safety's sake, and we drank very much very often, and we thought only of survival.

Perhaps the root of the madness was Vietnam. It could have been Jamie Wyeth's latest gallery exhibit for all that it mattered. The madness spread beyond all control, and touched everything. If the river of emotion arose from a single source, if the madness had a central purpose or reason, it soon became discon-

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nected, it broke away and became an event in itself. Reading Mao had not capsized T.C.'s fragile mind. T.C. had never heard of Mao. It was the madness. Like the Black Plague over Europe, it struck at every house. Or, more appropriately, every apartment.

III

Two months after my confrontation with T.C., the radical student caucus voted to close down the university in protest against the Vietnam war. The next afternoon Richard, one of those quietly reflective types, appeared at the magazine's office. His face was heavily lined, older, and his voice was broken with half-sobs. With short heaving breaths he told us that he had been running from place to place on campus asking different people how closing down the University of Texas would end the war in Vietnam. His eyes were glazed, and we patted his shoulder in dismay. But the question hung in the silent air for a long time until Bartlett, always practical, suggested that we skip the amenities and go get drunk. When we put Richard to bed that night we noted with satisfaction that he snored loudly and slept in blissful peace. There are times when the only answer is to ignore the question.

IV

When the President ordered the Cambodian excursion we knew what to expect and we tried to steel ourselves, but the tide was still overwhelming. Several times I would be working at the composing table while Atkinson leaned back in his chair studying a half-torn page stuck in his typewriter. Suddenly the chair would tilt forward.

"A horse has four legs. Lassie has four legs. Lassie is a horse." He would pause and look beseechingly in my direction. "It just doesn't work."

I could only nod sympathetically. We were slipping. Whenever T.C. tried to rush the front door to retrieve his accountant's desk I would instinctively grab the letter-opener and growl menacingly until he slinked away.

V

The greatest blow came with the Kent State killings. Bartlett rushed in with the news, disrupting an intense game of spades. His eyes had a strange gleam as he sketchily related the known facts. Then he paused greedily and hoarded our attention. "Should have shot the whole bunch of 'em. Should shoot some around here!" The suggestion was received with enthusiasm. We were desperate men, and the madness was in control.

This time it was the faculty who voted to close the university. A gesture of mourning, they said. Voting to close the university had become such a matter of routine by now that the administration and student body took it for granted and ignored it. The faculty, its collective pride wounded, voted to strike. Nobody missed them. On the modern American campus, who sees a professor anyway?

The radical student caucus saw it was being upstaged. After deliberating several proposals, they came up with a real winner, a sure-fire hit: an all-night student vigil on the university's main mall. Such a scheme was bound to draw a crowd.

It did. On the chosen night 5,000 (that's five *thousand*) bodies covered the mall. They brought blankets and sleeping bags. More importantly, they brought three rock bands, and over a hundred cases of beer, frisbees, and pot. The university witnessed the largest single fraternity party in its history. Five thousand boys and girls acting their age.

At 3 a.m. I wandered through the mall, stepping over embracing bodies, avoiding bacchanalian dancers, and watching my generation's unique new form of mourning.

Then with a jolt I recognized a face. A pretty face framed with blond hair. My own girlfriend! Mourning! With a beer in her hand!

I took her by the hand, lifted her to her feet, and led her straight home. It was my last stand for male chauvinism.

The next morning, after an argument at breakfast and a glass of orange juice in my face, I made my way to the Journalism Building. In the hallway I ran into a buddy who said he had gone to class for the first time in three months. The strike was having its effect. Students, even notoriously lazy students, were experiencing a sudden explosion of scholarly passion. People were going to class!

I was chuckling over the discovery when Atkinson entered the office. I beamed at him. "Lassie *is* a horse you fool." The revelation brought joyful tears to his eyes.

Inspired, I went looking for T.C. Thoughts of the courtroom scene swirled in my mind. I saw myself on the stand and heard the solemn pronouncement: "Not guilty by reason of temporary insanity. It's been going around lately, you know."

I couldn't find him and was saved.

VI

That is how we survived, all of us. By the slimmest of margins. Later I was to serve with a commission charged with explaining the pandemonium of that year to the President. The commission was composed of honorable, if slightly biased, men who ended up reflecting the pandemonium instead of explaining it. Who could explain it? And, for blessed reason's sake, who in Washington could be expected to explain it?

The madness occurred and it still lingers. Maybe the eminent conservative scholar will see that instead of being censured for not having eradicated it, we should be congratulated for having survived it — to tell the tale.

Nicholas Loniello:

The Right Not to Vote

People have an important right not to vote.

Lately I've come to view the people who refuse to vote out of protest or who fail to vote out of lack of interest as two very special breeds. They deserve a little more respect — perhaps even admiration — than we've been giving them.

The exhortations of a number of public and private agencies can make a man feel guilty if he doesn't go hog wild over one or another candidate.

But free citizens have two important rights corollary to the right to vote: First, the right to choose not to make a choice (or the right to despise politicians generally) and second, the right to ignore entirely the appeals of politicians and shrug off calls to civic duty.

Edgar Howe wrote: "That politicians are permitted to carry on the same old type of disgraceful campaign from year to year is as insulting to the people as would be a gang of thieves coming back to a town they had robbed, staging a parade, and inviting the citizens to fall in and cheer."

I wish to show that some lack of enthusiasm over politicians and some strong contempt for politicians are vital signs of a healthy democracy. A warning of danger occurs when "the right not to vote for any of the bums," or "the right not to be interested," is dishonored or disrespected.

Can you imagine living in a world where everyone wore either a Nixon, or McGovern, or Schmitz button? What would a cocktail party be like if there wasn't someone to denounce the whole pack as a bunch of shifty scoundrels? What would be McGovern's 14th welfare plan, or Nixon's 15th secret plan, if there weren't some ignoramus to say, "So what?"

Let's examine the people who believe office seekers by definition are a bunch of shifty scoundrels. A large share of the electorate believes every politician that ever came down the pike is an accomplished crook, or the partly-owned fool of crooks. They serve as constant reminders to the general public that no politician ever deserves to wear a crown.

H. L. Mencken wrote that "a good politician is as unthinkable as an honest thief." And Abraham Lincoln advised, "Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people and who, taken as a mass, are at least one step removed from honest men."

Political parties instinctively deify their candidates, especially their presidential candidates. Parties divide the world into the "we" and the "they." Parties speak of the Parade of Horribles that would follow the election of "them," and the March to Goodness that would follow the election of "us." And worse yet, they convince a large number of people it's true.

Now if we go about saying every good citizen should become involved, i.e., become either a Good Republican or a Good Democrat, we may find, some day, a hell of a lot more of one than the other. In which case our republic might go about the business of anointing a trusted king instead of electing a dubiously deserving president.

To keep from making that mistake, we need the reminders of those who distrust power-seekers.

Our republic should be grateful to the many who have a generic suspicion of politicians — they keep the rest of us from becoming too myopic in our fidelity to a political party. That special breed of elector who mistrusts every politician, who refuses to vote for either Devil "A" or Devil "B," preserves some very important tenets of democracy.

James Madison wrote: "The truth is that all men having power ought to be mistrusted."

Mohammed said: "He is the best of men who dislikes power."

Montesquieu advised: "Experience

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constantly proves that every man who has power is impeled to abuse it."

And Aldous Huxley wrote: "Obviously the passion for power is one of the most moving passions in man. All democracies are based on the proposition that power is very dangerous, and that it is extremely important not to let any one man or any one small group have too much power for too long a time. What is the American constitution but a device for limiting power?"

Those most suspicious of politics and political parties — whose chemistry reacts against the accumulation of power — are the true standard-bearers of our constitutional democracy. Thank Heaven we have citizens who despise Republicans and Democrats alike, for they genuinely hate the accumulation of the power our forefathers sought to curb.

Frankly, I'd rather entrust our government to their selfless wisdom than to the power-hungry ambitions of political parties.

We see those who love power are curbed by those who hate it, for the good of the republic. But what about the great ambivalent mass? What about that Great Swamp between Left and Right?

Politically, they know nearly nothing and do less. What honorable place do they deserve, if any? Let's take a look.

An interesting ecological argument can be made for the value of the Great Swamp to the health of the society.

Socrates said man is a political animal. He was wrong. There are political animals, Homo Sapiens Politicus; and there are other human beings, Homo Sapiens Swampus.

The preservation of the genus requires a diversity of the species. The fact that the crop of cornstalks each coming from the same seed is wiped out in totum by a single disease, suggests that the human race should have a variety of social and political inclinations to keep one calamity from wiping out the entire populace.

Without the relief of someone sighing, "So what?" McGovern's 14th welfare plan might cause a nation-wide headache that could keep every working man and woman home in bed for a week. And without the reassuring knowledge that there are some rational people who see no reason to give a damn, Nixon's 15th secret plan could cause the nation a wide epidemic of nervous fits.

Thomas Jefferson advised that "Politics is torment. I wouldn't wish it on anyone I love." We shouldn't try to embarrass or prod people into political activism. In the Great Swamp are a great many wonderful, happy, and important people. We shouldn't try to steer their attention or love away from other matters equally important to man as politics. Will Rogers said, "All politics is applesauce." Since a lot of people believe him, we shouldn't try to force the burden or responsibility of painful public matters on reluctant shoulders.

That aside, the ambivalent citizen does make important contributions to politics.

When he decides not to vote, he does the republic a favor. It is a fair guess that most who fail to vote either have not formed an intelligent opinion or do not give a damn about the outcome.

There is nothing as dangerous as the uninformed or careless vote. There is nothing as cheaply given as the vote merely to satisfy the urge to perform the rituals of civic duty, without much regard to candidates and issues. When one doesn't know enough or care enough to vote on his own initiative, we shouldn't drag or prod him to the polls.

But when the generally ambivalent voter *does* decide to make a trip to the polls, it is usually because some politician has struck up a responsive chord.

The existence of a large share of voters who only vote when given good reasons to cast their ballots provides a potential power base for new breeds of politicians from which to challenge those presently in power. This potential power base is necessary to keep politicians from anchoring themselves too securely in office.

So people have more than the right to vote, and more than the right to go hog wild after the election of the candidate of their choice.

People have the right to choose not to choose a candidate, and remind us of the inherent evils in the accumulation of power our founding fathers warned us about.

And people have the right not to become involved, and not to cast their ballot, because of a self-determined lack of knowledge or lack of interest.

A healthy democracy needs the exercise of all three — the right to vote, the right not to vote, and the right not to care.

Roger Rosenblatt

The Great American Column

Laughingstock

Ever since I was first told that he was a funny man, I have been trying, earnestly, to laugh at Art Buchwald. In the beginning I would take his stuff straight, moving down the column line by line, deliberately gearing the lower part of my face for the intellectual chuckles which a professional humorist and social commentator is supposed to generate. When that approach failed, I would try laughing ahead of time, revving up my hilarity to a terrific roar, like a Marx toy motorcycle, long before opening the newspaper. I had hoped the momentum would carry me. But when I finally came to Buchwald, all laughs wound down. I would begin to wheeze and think of sad times. Eventually I'd have to restrain myself from whipping the children.

Now I know there is an enormous number of people who find Buchwald uproariously funny, not at all the transparent and tepid humorist I have always found him to be, so I am willing to concede that there must be more to the man than meets the eye. What puzzles me, however, is how Buchwald has achieved a position of such singular prominence. In terms of the size of his audience, it is a prominence equal to Mark Twain's, Mr. Dooley's, Josh Billing's, Thurber's, and Benchley's put together, yet no one, not even Buchwald's admirers, would seriously compare him with any of these others. Buchwald is the premier humorist of the times. Whatever that may say about Buchwald, what does it say about the times?

From the beginning, from the 1720s when Ben Franklin started mailing his Dogood letters to the citizens of Boston, Americans have been hounded and harassed by topnotch humorists. They have stalked the national history like the best of our private eyes, knowing if they stuck close enough to the big people, the big movements and ideals, that the big laughs would be sure to follow. The Promise of America, the Dream of America, or any similar delusion by which we have shilled ourselves into one or another form of false innocence, has served as a continual set-up for such men. Democracy itself, mishandled, has served as a first rate set-up. People unable or unwilling to live up to their self-proclaimed expectations, high vaulted expressions of ethics and common good brought low by fact — this is the stuff of humor, the richest of material.

Humorists know that a laugh takes shape in the distance between pretense and truth, and when a man can no longer tell the conditions apart, that will provide the loudest laugh of all, indeed a career. A.B. Longstreet, Seba Smith, Joel Chandler Harris, and others, all understood this, for better or worse, and saw to it that the nation understood it as well. When Peter Finley Dunne let Mr. Dooley loose on the Spanish-American War, he was deadly serious. When Langston Hughes levelled Jesse B. Semple at racial bigots, he was wielding a formidable weapon. These men were critics all. Whenever they detected something dangerous, ludicrous, stupid, or hypocritical in our actions, they laughed at us, long and hard. They laughed us into submission.

Take, in comparison, Buchwald. This, from the beginning of a November column entitled "A defense fund of $40 million": "Although the Republicans collected more than $40 million for the presidential campaign, they spent only $49.50, mostly for radio broadcasts by President Nixon. I

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had assumed that the unspent money would be returned to the contributors, but I was mistaken."

The piece goes on to tell how the Republican National Committee reserved the forty million to defend its staff in court. It is sad enough that there isn't an hysterical high school humor magazine editor in the country who couldn't have guessed this, who couldn't have finished the thing himself, but wouldn't, fearing the exercise to be sophomoric. But not only is there no humorous invention in the piece; there is no criticism either, and no outrage, as there should be. The column is informed simply by the desire to make a joke, and therefore is not funny. Worst of all, it pretends to be anti-authoritarian when it is really pro-authoritarian, as is its author.

But the problem isn't Buchwald. The problem is us. We are all pro-authoritarian these days, and in a subtler and more foolish way than Buchwald's. No, we no longer admit the easy titular authorities, the authority of presidents, parents, generals, teachers, or cops; but we do concede, more often celebrate, the intrinsic authority of any human action or idea. As long as that action or idea comes from a fellow biped and sounds sincere, we seem to feel there must be something to it. Even if it is crazy and destructive, we give it the modern blessing for no other reason than that it arises from one of our number, who are friable creatures, after all, who have rights to our opinions, after all, who populate a morally relative world, after all, and who, thanks to Freud and Falstaff beer, are all in this together.

This investiture of authority in everything that moves accompanies the rumor, originally spread abroad by humorless people, that there is nothing in this God-forsaken, sex-degenerate, war-hungry, abortion-loving, drug-happy, race-rioting, money-grubbing country left to laugh at. What invention of comic fantasy or satirical exaggeration will not ultimately come true? Or: how could one dare to make light of the special sins of our times? Or: what are you smiling at, buddy? The proper question, I suggest, is how we have been able to contain ourselves all these years. The special sins of our times have been aching for belly laughs for close to a decade. All it takes to get rolling is an agreement on what we are willing to laugh at, that is, to know, about ourselves. That in turn, of course, takes some courage.

I realize that at this point I am probably only addressing the two other flabby liberals who read this publication, but to them, to the three of us, I contend that we hold within our flabbiness the humor of the age. A laugh takes shape in the distance between pretense and truth. It is funny, therefore, that we don't say what we mean about our liberalism. It is funny that we say too much about international peace, civil rights, welfare and poor people, et. al., and mean too little. It is funny that we make brave stands on civil liberties, and then disown the excesses, or make other stands to cover them. It is funny that we had no presidential candidate this year. It is funny that we told ourselves we did. The problems are not funny; they are real. It is our befuddlement which is funny, the gracelessness of our liberalism.

Buchwald pokes fun at the Mitchell family, the Pentagon, all the obvious stuff. Nothing he goes after is funny any more, if it ever was, because it is not important, not worth a titter. At best his targets are pathetic or undeniable, phantoms and straw men you can knock over with a feather. Buchwald himself is funnier than his column because of the topics his column avoids. Yet we are funny in the same way. We, too, are laughable for the things we avoid hearing about and dealing with. Muttering superannuated slogans, defining our political or ethical positions only insofar as they relate to positions less attractive, pasting our bumpers with stickers, sporting giant buttons like coats of mail, we hide from ourselves the one hilarious truth of the day worth exposing: that we do not know what the hell we are doing any more. That's a joke, son. That's a gas.

It can be argued, I suppose, that one only laughs at oneself from a position of strength, that it takes a certain security of mind and character to be able to look yourself in the eye and howl. But there is a different kind of laughter, albeit nervous, which comes from shaky ground as well. It is the laughter of the side of the mouth and trembling chest, the one which emerges more like an idea than a reflex, out of the bondage, or boredom, of our complacency. This is what Beckett would call the *risus purus*, the laugh which laughs at itself in the supreme act of criticism. It is at bottom a violent laugh, the riot, the scream, which is exactly what our graceless liberalism needs. It needs a kick in the pants and a pie in the face — one long razzberry.

Liberals are down this year, there's no doubt about it. We were down last year too, and the year before, and unless one misreads the signs, we're going to be down for a while to come. Being down, we could safely occupy ourselves by devising secret handshakes and sniggering our heads off at those who are up. It would kill the time, all right, but the laughter would be hollow, and I doubt if it would raise our prospects much. Furthermore, I'm goddamned tired of looking to Art Buchwald for my amusement when I could as readily, and with more satisfaction, look inward. Who knows? If we learned to make fun of our liberalism, we might eventually retrieve it. Wouldn't that be a laugh.

Charles A. Moser:

On "Democratic Totalitarianism"

You know, socialism among us spreads chiefly because of sentimentality.
—Peter Verkhovensky in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* (1871-72)

Especially since the conclusion of the Second World War, Americans have been intensely concerned about the possibility that a foreign power might impose a totalitarian regime upon us by force, and have invested immense sums of money in arms to see that this should not happen. There is nothing wrong with this frame of mind, although it seems to be losing its hold lately with the conclusion of such catastrophic agreements as the SALT treaties, for the threat is quite genuine. We would be foolish indeed to drop our guard now against external aggression. Yet we are engaged in what Willi Schlamm has so aptly termed an "international civil war," and we would do well to take a harder look at what is happening under our very noses on the domestic front.

When we do, those of us who believe in the idea of the free society and limited government can only be alarmed. Distasteful as I find most of his pronouncements, there is a sense in which I must agree with William Kunstler's recent assertions that we live in a dictatorship, run, as he sees it, by Richard Nixon. It is fantastic to term Mr. Nixon's weak-kneed administration a dictatorship at this point, but nevertheless we have in fact proceeded far down the path toward the totalitarian state in America, voluntarily and of our own accord, most often by majority vote of our own democratically elected representatives. This statement may seem ridiculous on its face to many, but a powerful case can, unhappily, be made for the proposition that we are moving toward what may be called a "democratic totalitarian" state.

To begin with, how should we understand the word "totalitarian"? The adjective has very negative connotations, and is ordinarily applied to nation-states headed by all-powerful despots, such as Hitler's Germany or the Soviet Union under Stalin. Certainly the United States is only very remotely comparable to them. Richard Nixon usually does not rule by decree (though we should recall the suddenness with which wage and price controls were imposed on the economy); we have no concentration camps for opponents of the Republican party; in some regards freedom of speech and criticism of government have received unprecedented protection in this country. But nagging questions still remain. May we not be entering a period of the tyranny of the democratic dogma, of a rage for equality?

In his excellent book of 1953, *The Quest for Community*, Robert Nisbet develops a view of modern western history as the

Great American Series

I hope the halls of the great educational institutions will stop being places of hatred and agitation against this government and this society.

Mayor Daley

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gradual breakdown of organizations intermediate between the individual and the state (the church, the guild, the local community, the family), the consequent atomization of society into its individual members, who then collectively constitute "the masses," and the reintegration of individuals under the unmediated power of the state. When the process is complete, the individual owes his primary loyalty, not to his family, his church, or his community — indeed these have no meaning except insofar as they serve the state's ends — but to the state. In return, the state assumes responsibility for his well-being, at least so long as he is loyal to it. In traditional society, the state is only one of many social entities to which the individual owes fealty under certain circumstances; his loyalty to church or family may override his allegiance to the state. In a totalitarian society the individual may experience no such conflict of loyalties: his sole allegiance is to the state. On the way to the totalitarian state the individual is urged to "liberate" himself from the cramping confines of family, church, and locality, and thus these intermediate groupings are destroyed. Concurrently the "freed," atomized individual is integrated into the framework of the state, but now with his areas of choice and responsibility far more restricted than they were before, although he does not feel this at the outset because he accepts the political objectives of the state and therefore considers himself quite free when he does what the state wishes him to do (compare the Marxist definition of freedom as the recognition of necessity). Only those few who reject the aims of the state experience the full force of its repressive powers, which are now infinitely greater than those of the formerly existing intermediary organizations.

The application of such an interpretation to American life today yields some illuminating, though quite distressing, insights. It cannot be denied that in our time many of the established "intermediary organizations" of western society are under severe disintegrative assault. "Liberation" is the current catchword. The family, the university, the church, private associations generally so long as they seek to maintain their unique character, are mocked and sneered at. A passage from Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, published precisely a century ago and probably the most powerful literary statement ever made against the statist ideal, describes our own situation with astonishing fidelity. The "rogue" socialist Peter Verkhovensky cries at one point: "The teacher who laughs with the children at their God and at their cradle is ours already....Schoolboys who kill a peasant for the sake of a thrill are ours. The juries who acquit all criminals without distinction are ours. A public prosecutor, who trembles in court because he is not sufficiently progressive, is our, ours.... The docility of schoolboys and fools has reached the highest pitch; the schoolmasters are full of bile; everywhere we see vanity reaching inordinate proportions, enormous bestial appetites....Do you realize how many converts we shall make by trite and ready-made ideas? When I went abroad, Littre's theory that crime is insanity was the vogue; when I returned, crime was no longer insanity, but just commonsense, indeed, almost a duty and, at any rate, a noble protest." The effect of such actions and viewpoints is to cut the individual adrift from his intermediary moorings so that when he tires of his excessive freedom he may easily be compacted into the total state.

This process assumes the existence of a general uniformity of opinion throughout the state. Freed from intermediary bonds, few individuals will have the courage to think their own thoughts, and even fewer the bravery to act upon them. Indeed, near unanimity of opinion is a major source of the state's power over the atomized individual: "freed" from the necessity of making his own decisions, he is told how to view the great majority of questions in his own and his country's life. For all the superficial variety of American culture, it is indisputable that in the media and among the educated classes who think extensively about national and international politics there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion on the great bulk of these questions. It is next to imperative to believe,

for instance, that the Vietnam war is wholly repugnant and indefensible, that communism presents no internal or external threat to our society, that no differences in individual ability are attributable to race, and — most important — that integration of the races and of social and economic classes, indeed, general obliteration of distinctions, is the highest good. Such propositions are considered effectively decided by the overwhelming majority of intellectuals and media people. Those who express fundamentally different viewpoints are gaped at in incredulity and disbelief. Usually they are simply ignored thereafter. If they cannot be ignored, they are ostracized, or, where possible, prevented by informal means from communicating their views to any very large groups of people. And those few who penetrate all these defenses (e.g. Senator Goldwater and Vice-President Agnew) are viciously attacked. It is important to note here that most of the liberal intellectuals sincerely look upon these propositions as unexceptionable goods which can be denied only by irrational or evil men (the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church once exclaimed that those who opposed his plans to reform the church and merge it with other protestant denominations were not in their right minds). Being dedicated to these propositions as moral truths, they easily justify their violation of traditional concepts of freedom of speech (I might comment in passing that the concept of "freedom of speech" requires considerable re-thinking in an age of mass communications: can someone not prevented from speaking on a street-corner be said to enjoy the same freedom of speech as one who appears constantly on network television and reaches millions?) After all, they argue, should someone who is clearly in error, or whose "truth" would have harmful social consequences, be permitted to spread doubt and confusion? And so it comes about that even in that citadel of free inquiry, the university, not only are proponents of certain points of view forcibly prevented from speaking, but the very notion of academic freedom is called into question when it would protect them. The liberal intellectuals now think a number of viewpoints immoral, and immorality must be suppressed.

Although the new definition of morality differs greatly from the older one, those who promote it resemble their predecessors in their desire to legislate it, and not trust to its enforcement and advancement through informal social sanctions. More and more of their concepts are being embodied in national legislation or are being pushed through administrative regulation by Federal bureaucracies which the new totalitarians now control. In short, their morality lies behind much current legislation. Each particular project or law is proposed for some "humanitarian" end of which most if not all would approve: food stamps to feed the hungry, family services for family-less children, health care for the sick, social security for the aged, etc. In the overall scheme of things, however, each of these programs promotes the collapse of the old intermediary structures and the conjoining of atomized individuals under the aegis of the state.

One of the most "democratically totalitarian" pieces of recent legislation is the Equal Employment Opportunity Act. Almost everyone would agree with the law's objective in the abstract: to ensure that irrelevant obstacles shall not hinder individuals from making the best use of their talents. As applied, however, the law probably causes more problems than it cures. In particular, universities are required to increase their hiring from various minority groups, including women — defined as a minority for these purposes in good Orwellian fashion — in desirable positions. The representation of minorities cannot be increased without the introduction of a quota system and the hiring of even academic personnel, not on the basis of qualification, but on political grounds: is the applicant a member of some minority group? In communist countries the criterion is different (is the applicant a Communist party member?), but it is at bottom still political rather than professional. Thus the Equal Employment Opportunity Act is rapidly leading to the further politicization of the universities. A strikingly totalitarian element in the administrative implemen-

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tation of the law is that a person accused of practicing discrimination in hiring seems to be considered guilty until or unless he proves himself innocent. This is a full reversal of traditional juridical procedure in this country, but it is typical of totalitarian countries, where political crimes are regarded as far more serious than ordinary ones.

Universities are compelled to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity laws under threat of court action or immediate and total cut-off of Federal funds, to which nearly all our universities have become addicted. In this instance even the traditional right to push for a law's repeal or alteration is threatened, for a faculty member who has anything to do with hiring at a university and who takes a public stand against the application of the law to his university might jeopardize its financial situation: his views might be taken as evidence that the university was not complying with the law. The vast majority of the university faculty, though they approve of the law's intent, are strongly opposed to the application of the law in faculty hiring. Yet, with a few honorable and striking exceptions, they will not speak out to this effect for fear of economic retaliation. Freedom of speech in this vital area is thus restricted through the pressure of Federal law and regulation.

Integration of many sorts under the aegis of the state has been the objective of laws other than the Equal Employment Opportunity Act. For instance, although even the neo-totalitarians must concede that school busing has not achieved what it was supposed to and that it has aroused massive opposition among the people whose lives it touches most directly, and although many of them seem to have accepted the thesis of such scholars as Edward Banfield that the real problem in integration is not race but social class, they have not given up. They have merely adopted another tack, that of altering housing patterns to achieve full mixing of races and, more especially, of socio-economic classes. Although difficult to achieve, this can be effectively promoted by subsidies distributed by HUD for the construction of low-income housing in higher-income areas. The bureaucrats are toying with the idea of requiring some minimum percentage, say 15 percent, of low-income housing in all new construction projects, a design which would eventually make the "escape to the suburbs" impossible. The potential for social chaos inherent in this approach was visible in the recent Forest Hills dispute in New York where the local citizenry found that Big Brother truly would not let them alone. Under present legislation officials dedicated to the utopian ideal of socio-economic mixing can do a great deal of damage, but they cannot reach their objective entirely without laws restricting freedom of movement and perhaps association. In the present climate of opinion such draconian legislation is not entirely unthinkable so long as it is presented as promoting "social justice."

The family is another intermediary association of long standing which has recently come under heavy fire from the neo-totalitarians. It has indisputably been weakened by industrialization and other factors of modern life in any case, but deliberate government policies have hastened its disintegration. The introduction some time ago of Social Security, followed later by various programs for the aged, especially medical ones, have made it ever easier for middle-aged and young adults to consign their parents to old people's homes, and thus free themselves of any responsibility for them. Now the attack upon family responsibility has shifted to its offspring with the introduction of Child Development legislation, founded on the notion that the child is the ward of the state, that the state should accept prime responsibility for his nurture as far back as the prenatal stages. Legislation of this sort was vetoed by the President in December, but a virtually identical bill passed the Senate once more in June by a lopsided margin of 73-12. During the Senate debate an amendment was proposed and adopted which illustrates graphically how, having contributed so mightily to the disintegration of the traditional family, the state is now reintegrating its constituent parts: the amendment proposed that, where possible, Child Development centers be established near old people's homes and that the elderly be encouraged to assist in raising these children. A foster grandparent program along similar lines already exists and evidently is rather successful. Moreover, Child Development legislation makes explicit provision for "single parents," a euphemism in many cases for women who used to be called unwed mothers. Under these arrangements it will be made easier for single persons to have children, without any social stigma attached, and keep them or not as they wish. This clearly will weaken the traditional family unit.

An important instrument of totalitarian change in our society is what might be termed "legalization," or the widest possible extension of the legal rights available to an individual as a member of the state to the individual as a member of those intermediary organizations which still survive, as a means of promoting their dissolution. It is no chance matter that many of the neo-totalitarians take up the practice of law and advance their objectives through the courts, which are heavily populated by judges of like persuasion. When a university finds it difficult to expel a student who has violated its special compact without going through an expensive legal arbitration, when churches fear to expel clergymen who loudly proclaim their rejection of religious doctrine, when young people and even children are told they have extensive legally enforcable "rights" over against their parents and school administrations; when private organizations are pressured to adhere to the same non-exclusionary policies as the state; in short, when "civil rights" of the type guaranteed to members of the state are injected like cancer cells into intermediary organizations, then those organizations are gradually weakened as unique entities, and the individual looks more and more to the state as the guarantor of his expanded "rights." The net result is the aggrandizement of state power and the continued estrangement of the individual from all other loyalties.

On a slightly less profound level, the totalitarian control of the American economy has been increasing recently. The idea of a state-run economy has always been repugnant to all Americans save a small number of socialist intellectuals. It is still so to most of us. And yet we find ever greater controls being clapped upon the economy, often by overwhelming majority votes of the Congress, in the name of safety, ecology, protection of the consumer against the manufacturer, and even protection of the consumer against himself, as with recent auto-safety devices and the abolition of cigarette advertising on television. Because of the peculiar historical situation in which we find ourselves, the neo-totalitarians avoid discussing bans on alcohol and narcotics, but they plainly display the mentality of those who framed the

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prohibition amendment. Congress passes the most extreme anti-pollution and safety measures by wide margins with little consideration of the confusion they may cause or even the possibility of genuinely implementing them. Most striking of all were the broad powers assumed by the President, and later confirmed by the Senate with only four dissenting votes, in imposing wage and price controls (he said they were voluntary, but non-compliance was punishable) upon the economy in order to control inflation. The controls have so far been weakly enforced, fortunately, and they cannot and will not stop inflation in any case, but they unquestionably represent a direct intrusion into the private life of every American and violate the principles of a free economy. But very few voices were raised in opposition to them, and businessmen were brought to Washington to express their support for them.

Another disturbing thing is the greater and greater percentage of Americans who are directly dependent upon the government for all or some of their livelihood: government employees at the Federal, state, and local levels; the millions on welfare, unemployment, and social security; other millions employed by firms or schools partially or wholly dependent on government funding. We have some distance to go before attaining the totalitarian ideal of the state as sole employer, but we are much nearer to it than we were twenty or thirty years ago.

As a matter of fact, the general indifference of the American public to our course toward "democratic totalitarianism" is in some ways more alarming than the course itself. All too often it turns out that old forms have become mere shells, without support within. A relatively trival example of this is a club at Columbia University which had traditionally barred women: when a vote was taken on the question a short time ago, only one vote out of more than 200 was cast in favor of retaining the prohibition. Truly these are hard times for the traditionalists among us, those happy few who genuinely believe in the principles upon which our society was built but which, we fear, remain standing solely by virtue of an inertia that becomes less trustworthy with every passing day. Now we are haunted by the disquieting suspicion that the whole philosophy of our free society with limited government may be a hollow shell. Perhaps we have nothing left to defend with our rockets. Perhaps if the next president were to announce that, in order to stop inflation, eliminate poverty, discrimination, and racism, and promote the general welfare, he was transforming the United States into a one-party "democratic totalitarian" state, only about five senators out of 100 would vote against him.

Perhaps I am wrong.

E.C. Pasour, Jr.

Information Aspects of Alternative Economic Systems

Any form of economic system requires information. Furthermore, the amount of information required to allocate goods and services efficiently is much greater for an advanced economy than for a simple agrarian (or subsistence) society. The information role of prices in a market economy has long been recognized by some people, but is not fully appreciated by most people. In the United States, one can better appreciate the role and impersonal nature of market prices after observing the highly arbitrary and personal nature of wage and price decisions made under the current regime of wage and price controls.

In a free enterprise economy, the market serves as a mechanism through which changes in consumer wants and preferences are transmitted to producers via prices. This phenomenon is often referred to as consumer sovereignty. That is, an increase in consumer demand for a particular product results in a price increase which serves as a signal to producers of the product to increase production. As a product price increases, additional resources are drawn into production of the good by bidding up resource prices.

Any market price reflects a great deal of information concerning demand and supply conditions for that particular good or service. When one considers the number of goods and services in a modern economy, the problem of pricing all goods and services by an alternative mechanism is readily seen to be one of gargantuan proportions.

The alternative to the market as a way of pricing resources and final products is central direction, which by its very nature involves bureaucracy. That is, there must be some organizational structure to determine and implement decisions pertaining to product mix and the allocation of resources. As Lindbeck has pointed out, "...the more strongly we are against bureaucracy, the more we should be in favor of markets." (Assar Lindbeck, *The Political Economy of the New Left, An Outsider's View*. Harper & Row, N.Y., 1971.) Economic decisions must be coordinated either through a market or by a formalized administrative process. Increases in the number of economic decisions related to a single product accompany increases in the specialization and division of labor. Hence, the scope of the coordination problem increases with economic growth.

In recent years, the New Left in the United States has spurned both the market and formalized administrative procedures as ways of coordinating economic decisions. Instead, it is proposed that economic decisions should be based on the principle of cooperation.

In a book devoted to a "radical analysis of American society," Edwards et al. indict both traditional state socialism and capitalism. (R.C. Edwards, M. Reich, and T.E. Weisskopf, *The Capitalist System, A Radical Analysis of American Society*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972.) Instead "participatory socialism" is held up as the model society. Participatory socialism "requires the elimination of bureaucracies and all hierarchial forms and their replacement...by a self-governing and self-managing people." This type of social organization is said to entail a sense of "egalitarian cooperation." In this view "changes in the environment can interact with changes in the individual to usher in a new era of human cooperation" (Edwards, et al., p. 5).

The economic implications of such a society are quite drastic. First, if the supplier of any good or service is not motivated by pecuniary rewards, this implies that the supply of the good is perfectly inelastic. Increases in price would then have no effect on the amount of production. Second, if individuals reduce their desires for any good to the quantity available, the problem of scarcity is solved. In the absence of scarcity, there are no economic problems.

I contend that the achievement of this scenario which assumes an economic system based on human cooperation is doomed to failure. First, human beings are strongly motivated by self-interest and the profit motive. It seems almost impossible to conceive of a society functioning for any significant period of time in which men work only for the betterment of other men and are not concerned with nor motivated by material goods. Even utopian colonies operating on this principle have not been able to function on a self-sustaining basis for extended periods of time. (P.A. Samuelson supports this statement. "I defy you to show that it (a utopian self-sufficient colony) can continue to exist as a viable economic entity without monthly allowance checks from parents outside the community." — Lindbeck, op. cit., forward, p. XIX) One would expect the problem of resolving conflicts between individuals to be much less in such conditions than for an entire economy. Consequently, there seems to be a heavy burden on those who hold that the social environment can be modified in such a way that the profit motive can be entirely eliminated.

Let us assume, however, that a nation is composed of individuals each of whom has as his paramount goal not self-interest but "social responsibility." If each individual attempts to follow his social responsibility (instead of his self-interest), what is the outcome likely to be?

It is quite clear that in cases where a single individual attempts to sacrifice his own interests to further some higher social responsibility, the result is likely to be different from that anticipated. For example, the individual who stops using umber products in order to conserve our natural timber resources is likely to do little more than inconvenience himself

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since his use of these products is a negligible part of the total use.

Now assume that all individuals attempt to follow their "social responsibility." What criterion, then, would be used in determining the proper course of action? The proper course of action is taken to be that which will further the public interest. However, the public interest is determined by adding up, in some sense, the preferences of the individuals comprising society. If each individual does not make decisions on the basis of his own preferences, there is then no basis to determine what the public wants or, indeed, what action is in the public interest.

In the above example, assume that everyone attempts to follow his social responsibility in the use of timber products. Should everyone stop using timber products? While this would undoubtedly solve the alleged exploitation problem, there is little reason to expect that this would represent an optimal solution to the problem.

The same problem would face the person making a decision concerning choice of vocation. If one ignores market signals in choosing his vocation, what criterion would be used? That is, how would one decide which vocation he should enter in order to promote the "public interest"?

The answer to the problems or questions posed requires that individuals be omniscient. For example, in the case of the choice of vocation, each individual would then presumably need to know his comparative advantage relative to all other workers in performing those tasks which must be performed. If each individual were omniscient, he would know and be able to evaluate the impact of any action on his part on the level of satisfaction of everyone else. Such calculations would have to be made by each individual in deciding what vocation to enter, the price to charge for anything he had to sell, or any other decision which affected other people.

A variation of the cooperation theme in choosing a vocation is described in Reich's *The Greening of America*. (Charles A. Reich. Random House, N.Y., 1970.) The suggested criterion for each individual is to select the vocation which is most satisfying and fulfilling regardless of whether the selected vocation is an established occupation. In Reich's view, although the vocational decision should not be made with total indifference to the needs of the community, the individual can best contribute to his fellow men by selecting a vocation which will "affirm the self" (p. 368). The information requirements necessary to select a vocation which will meet these criteria are no less demanding than those whose sole criterion is cooperation.

We know, of course, that individuals are not and never will be all-wise. Thus, there is no reason to expect the results of an economic system which relies on "cooperation" (or self-affirmation) to provide signals to consumers and producers to be those expected or desired by its proponents. In such a system, there is no mechanism to prevent a surplus of artists or a shortage of plumbers.

The modern theory of welfare economics demonstrates that efficiency in production and consumption are guaranteed by a perfectly competitive free enterprise system. The necessary condition is that firms maximize profits and individuals maximize satisfaction. This is a modern day version of Adam Smith's Invisible Hand doctrine, viz., that individuals and firms, by following self interest, serve the public interest. This assumes that there are no side effects ("externalities") associated with the acts of individuals or firms.

If production or consumption decisions by particular firms or individuals affect production costs or the level of satisfaction by other individuals, resources will be misallocated unless the firm or individual is forced to take these side effects into account when making such decisions. For example, in driving an automobile or polluting a stream, there is a divergence between costs to the individual (private costs) and costs to society (social costs). Under these conditions, the rules of the game must be formulated by government such that firms or individuals find it in their self-interest to take account of the external effects (e.g., by taxation) in making production or consumption decisions. Here again, however, there is no reason to expect the "cooperative" ethic to lead to the optimal result.

In summary, on the basis of past experience, it seems unrealistic to expect firms or individuals to place social welfare above self-interest. Furthermore, if a single individual attempts to do so, the result is likely to be different from that anticipated. For example, the individual who stops driving his automobile to fight pollution will do little more than inconvenience himself since his contribution to the pollution problem is a negligible part of the total. Even if all firms and individuals were motivated by the "cooperative ethic," the information required to act in the public interest would pose the same problem discussed above. In the case of automobile pollution, each individual would then need to know how much the cost of operating an automobile should be increased to make the private cost equivalent to the social cost. Again, he would have to know and be able to evaluate the impact of his action on everyone else. Such omniscence is absent even in the halls of academe!

This is not to say that altruism on the part of firms or individuals is necessarily bad. Indeed, some degree of "cooperation" is necessary and desirable for a smoothly operating economy. However, it is not clear to what extent altruism is a laudable objective for individual decision-making. The above cited examples illustrate that the information requirements facing individuals relying on cooperation as a touchstone for choice exceed those which mortals can hope to achieve in a modern society.

The practical choice for virtually every economic activity in a modern society is then reduced to either the market or central direction. Consequently, an attack on competition (the price system) in any phase of economic life is tantamount to an endorsement of bureaucratic planning or central direction for that phase of economic activity. The relevant comparison in making such choices is not between the existing market and an idealized bureaucracy. Instead, it should compare existing markets with existing bureaucratic agencies. The effect of many regulatory agencies has been found in recent years to be much different from that described by the statutes. In weighing the merits of the market or centralized control for any particular activity, it should be remembered that the market almost always possesses the virtue of reducing the coercive control by man in the affairs of other men.

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I didn't, but took those cheap and rancid mixtures recommended as being as good as WILBOR'S, by
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Book Review:

Doing Dylan is a Trip Unto Itself

Anthony Scaduto

Grosset & Dunlap, $7.95

They tell me that Bob Dylan lives out here near me. He apparently spooked a group of high school students some months ago by appearing unannounced in their classroom. Bob Dylan is a name that, like it or not, has captured a part of the essence of the 1960s.

The other evening, Barbra came home from the theatre where she works and told me that she had gotten Bob Zimmerman to write a note to our son Dylan. Our son was not named after Bob Dylan, but after Dylan Thomas. Yet, the mystique is real and the subject is certainly a vital part of our culture.

I attempted to contact Dylan through a school-teacher source, but apparently my note went astray because only Barbra has seen the man that is so poorly portrayed in Anthony Scaduto's book *Bob Dylan: A Biography.*

Scaduto's book is *New York Times'* computerized rehash. Even the *New York Daily News* got it on, with Lillian Roxan calling the book "a captivating and obsessive (sic) portrait of a genius." The rest of the reviews that I read, from *Penthouse* to *Creem* seem equally adulatory.

The book is a bummer. There is nothing new in it and nothing of importance emerges for the Dylanphiles. Scaduto is to Dylan what Irving was to Hughes. It is within this context that I shall attempt to infuse some information regarding the Dylan trip that I took.

Michael Ochs, Phil's brother, captures the essence of the Dylan trip when he wrote: "A lot of us grew up with Bob Dylan, and now that we are all searching for the next horizon, Dylan included, it's a real joy to relive those early years."

Enough lies exist in this universe. Scaduto might have dispelled a few, but instead he only added to the list. I feel it's time to set some facts straight. Jerry Rubin lied in his scatological study, *Do It!*, when he said that I went "skinny dipping" with Fidel Castro. Interesting as the thought might be, the reality states that neither I nor any of the early travel ban busters swam in the altogether with the head of the Cuban Communist government.

The same mythology is portrayed in Scaduto's book, but in my case it is conducted by omission. According to the book, Bob Dylan received the Tom Paine award from the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee "in behalf of James Foreman and SNCC." Modesty aside, the drunken Dylan scandal at the ECLC dinner began with his accepting the award in my name and for all "the people who went to Cuba."

It just so happens that I was at the banquet and have the transcript of the tapes taken there. Scaduto relies upon no less an authority than Nat Hentoff for his info on the ECLC banquet. Hentoff wasn't there and if he were he would hardly own up to the travesty that took place that night in the Americana Hotel. The New Left protects its innards—almost as carefully as the Old Left.

Envision a cold December night in New York City. Add to that, a posh hotel and a convention hall full of old and-or middle-aged veterans of the Long Island Communist Party or fellow-travelers

Great American Series

We would do better if professors would teach more Americanism and advocate change within the process of law.

Alderman Thomas E. Kean
Chicago

gathering to show off their furs and money in the presence of Corliss Lamont and the ECLC staff.

The whole thing was bizarre. I was obliged, being the Associate Editor of *Rights*. then the newsletter of the ECLC, to convey James Baldwin to the banquet. I would rather have picked up Bobby, but Gene Foreman was entrusted to that task and it proved near fatal. Albert Maher and I smuggled Mr. Baldwin down Central Park West to the Americana and were turned on by his whole being.

Baldwin, on the other hand, was neither interested in us nor in the whole of the ECLC banquet. As a matter of historical note, Mr. Baldwin was most straight and devoted to trying to cope with the white super-libs while worrying that the commies in the audience would not really relate to him.

The issue is (and Scaduto does do credit to the evening by noting that the description of the affair was Hentoff's and not Dylan's) what happened. A book about that evening would be as popular as *Peyton Place*, except for the fact that most of the audience would rather forget it happened.

James Baldwin was the major thrust at the dinner and Dylan was supposed to receive the award and say a few words and be on his way. The way it happened was Dylan decided to spin a yarn, but the sun spots were obviously out of focus. He was either drunk or stoned: remember this was 1963 and most of the left was still ignorant about Dope.

But Albert Maher and his friends from Harvard had made it possible for a number of us to discover the Timothy Leary road a good bit before the Americana caper. I am not intimating that Dylan was doing acid then (that night) but I know he was smoking Dope with Gene and drinking an inordinate amount of Beaujolais wine.

My own position was compromised from the beginning, as I had to be Mr. "nice guy" to the old ladies and the bourgeois communists, while Dylan and Gene were wandering around like a couple of Bowery bums. Through it all, James Baldwin was cool.

To keep it short, Dylan blew the evening by giving a political dada speech while accepting the award. He not only insulted the age barrier by noting the bald heads, but had the audacity to note that we all had a bit of the Oswald in us. Remember who had just been shot. Gag, choke, burp...

The last thing the latent left-wing wanted to hear was some long-haired weirdo suddenly striking into their very private political parts. But Dylan went on to yet alienate what was left of the cocktail set. They just couldn't shut him up. Unfortunately, for the ECLC at least, is the fact that Dylan attempted to leave the ballroom prior to his award, but was stopped at the door by the very physical presence of Edith Tiger (now the super boss of the ECLC) because he "had to accept" the award.

Had time and grace had their sway, the whole evening might have been pulled off, but Dylan could not escape either through the doors or through the bottle. So, he accepted the award (in my name) and lost the ECLC at least $10,000 in the process.

This whole Dylan episode had vast repercussions on the left. I was to speak before a front group of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee the next week and they demanded that I submit a copy of my remarks prior to speaking. The locusts were indeed loose in the land.

I insist upon correcting this point because I am tired of being confused with James Foreman. It's bad enough that the Red Chinese reprinted one of my poems and referred to me as a "leading Negro poet" without the Foreman episode. Even if we all do look alike...

The Scaduto book also abruptly overlooks the whole issue of Dope in the Dylan mythology. The New Left garbage collector (and heir apparent in the zippie movement), A.J. Webberman, is convinced that Dylan was using drugs at some point in his career because A.J. found some pieces of sterile cotton among the remains of garbage around Dylan's New York abode in 1969-70. So much for hogs.

Everyone in the Dylan assemblage of my time was doing some Dope. The 1963-64 period, which is the only time of which I have any knowledge of Dylan, was full of pot, hash, acid,and (may God spare us) Gene Foreman's heroin needle. I do not know that Dylan did H, but I do know that he did Dope.

Scaduto makes it a point to discredit Webberman by the roll up your sleeve trick. The only time that I did any

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Dope with Dylan was one night with Peter Yarrow in the West Village and I ultimately had to be helped into a cab and sent back to my apartment in Hell's Kitchen.

There are at least two other deletions from what *Publishers Weekly* has called Scaduto's "superbly detailed and important biography." I shall attempt to deal with them, but you must excuse me if I get a bit catty.

1971 found the *New York Times* and Merle Miller coming out of the closet. In 1964, the whole band of Village freaks were intuned with Allen Ginsburg and his assemblage of people. If you have never had your ass patted by Peter Orlovsky (Ginsburg's lover of the period) then you have missed the significance of the numerous drunken late night suppers we all had at the Lion's Head.

Nowhere in the book is this whole bohemian interculture mentioned. Before the lawsuits, I am not intimating that Dylan was, to coin the phrase, coming out of the closet, but rather only that at this juncture within the circle of the Lion's Heads' magnificent Alsace-Lorraine chef's cuisine, lots of things were happening, but they had some style.

For those of you still titilated, I am afraid that I can only recall kissing Dylan once (tongue in cheek) at Clark Foreman's home (father of Gene and then the director of the ECLC and *(definately not a communist)*, following a riot at New York's Town Hall where I had been among many speakers following our trip to Castroland and our first appearance before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Because this "review" is more an attempt at filling in various segments of the era for posterity than in debating comma faults, allow me one last note on that era. Dylan was not at any time a communist or even a fellow traveler. We attempted to use him, but he held strong. I can recall a number of talks up at Corliss Lamont's own "private property" on the Palisades, the interchange falling between Joan Baez, Michael Knew (am I the only one around who will admit to Michael and his relationship with Joan?), Clark Foreman and his wife, Mari, Bob Dylan, Albert Maher, Ted Stuart, and myself. Albert and I were often trying to get both Joan and Bob into the violence trip of the Progressive Labor Party and they both rejected it completely. Dylan was a social anarchist at that time and almost apolitical when it came to left-wing agit-prop kinds of moving the masses.

I am at odds with my old friend Carl Oglesby when he notes in the Scaduto book that the New Left took Dylan to their political bosom — only because I am inclined to find it more rape than love. I cannot accept the pseudo-literary New York hell bent for intellectualism bent that ascribes all favorable facets of art to the left-wing simply because the left-wing so decides. In other words, I think that the left-wing used Dylan for what they could, when they wanted, and then simply oystered him into their super-hyped epistemology of the present in order to make it appear as if he were always one of them. Dylan today is apparently much more in the New Left than he was during my acquaintanceship with him. The George Jackson dribble is agit-prop at its worst and it can only be hoped that in the relatively near future Dylan will again return to the individualism of Frank Meyer, whom he knew, rather than the jaded lyrics of the Left.

Dylan was an individual when I knew him and I was struck with the fact that he showed me a note from Johnny Cash in 1964 remarking that Cash was the immediate influence in his life. This at the very time that the left-wing was caught in its own dialectic about Dylan.

The influence of Cash in 1964 is especially important if we are to consider Dylan and his music outside of the collectivist culture trip we are subjected to by the mass media rock magazines and pundits. I am not intimating that Dylan was ever anything more than an individualist, but the sheer importance of that fact has often been covered over in the propaganda prose of the New Left politico-rock-dopies in their quest to force Dylan into their very own mold of reality.

Consider for a moment the various stages of Dylan and the response of the New Left (let alone the Old Left). When he appeared at Newport and had the audacity to stop the contrite mimic of the thirties' syndicalism sound and came on with electric background, the Old Left went Stalinist and not only booed and booed, but were off Dylan and back to Seeger as if shot out of the Kremlin. When Dylan finally appeared on TV and did a record with the Cash-Nashville people, the New Left freaked and went into their paranoid anti-working class cowboy mentality. *But*, when Dylan does a disaster, like his rewriting of the shooting of George Jackson, the New Left flips over and once again bootlicks.

So much for politics and art. Dylan is an individual and a poet. My hope is that the future holds more hope for the biography of Bob Dylan than Mr. Scaduto.

Phillip Abbott Luce

Book Review:

Oh! Sex Education!

by Mary Breasted
Praeger, $7.95

As everyone knows, a person who is against sex education in the public schools is typically a sputtering, stammering fanatic, who showers with a bathing suit on, and in whom the very mention of "sex" is apt to trigger whole systems of facial tics. In addition, it is a known fact that opposition to sex education correlates very highly with opposition to flouridation of water, the refusal to accept Federal Reserves notes as legal tender, and the belief that one's internal organs are under the control of the Communists.

But *might* it after all be the case that one can oppose tax-supported sex education without also having favored bombing Haiphong or supporting the mandatory death penalty for possession of marijuana? Is it *barely* possible that an intelligent, humane person, concerned with the welfare of young people and the dignity and self-determination of society at large, could reasonably reject the indoctrination of school children with the public school teachers' idea of "mature" and "constructive" sexual conduct?

The present book provides the opportunity for an assessment of the controversy. The author, Mary Breasted, has quite good liberal credentials, as these things go in journalism. A graduate of Radcliffe and of the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University, she is currently a reporter for *The Village Voice*. Moreover, her book shows her to be unusually intelligent and sensitive, and of an attractive cast of mind. (She is one of the few reporters for the *Voice* who looks outward and not inward when she is covering a story.) Given her background, it was natural that she began her investigations with something like the stereotype outlined above, and much of the interest of her book consists in observing how empirical reality broke through the confines of her preconceptions.

She begins by discussing in detail the struggle over the Family Life and Sex Education course in the junior and senior high schools of Anaheim, California, culminating in the victory of the Antis in the school board election of April, 1969. This victory frightened sex education forces around the country (principally in the form of SIECUS — the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States), who had for a number of years been quietly propagandizing and lobbying to the point where, at the end of 1969, probably over half of the nation's public schools had such courses. Sadly but valiantly, they prepared to face and defeat the legions of ignorance and "hate" that so shockingly had risen up against their disinterested efforts at enlightenment.

The most illuminating parts of the book consist in Miss Breasted's analysis of the character and motives of those on the two sides of the controversy, which she bases largely on interviews and personal observation, as well as on their published work. It is here that we find the grain of truth in the conventional wisdom-Playboy Forum view of the problems, discussed earlier. There *is* a strange (libido-fed?) luridness about much of the Right's thinking on this issue. Stories of a "Satanic" plot linking SIECUS and the ADA; *Manchurian Candidate* fears revolving around hypnosis, Pavlovian psychology, and rock music; warnings about "socialists," Communists, and their "signs," are all, I suppose, rather terrifying to someone

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who comes face to face with that sort of mentality for the first time. I myself consider such fantasies more or less high camp; in any case, frightening or entertaining, such views do not characterize those who really run the country.

The pro-sex education forces are the ones that are sociologically much more significant. "The people who belonged to the SIECUS board," Miss Breasted tells us, "came from the highest levels of the university or church hierarchies." The two great middle-class cartels, the American Medical Association and the National Education Association, were won for the cause, the NEA in particular becoming a great promoter of it, and HEW now provides funding for teacher education programs in the area. That the mass media lent their support goes without saying. In fact, everything that is enlightened, everything that is humane, everything that sets the tone in America, is in favor of sex education. (Sometimes, when it came down to cases, according to the author, the "humanity" was manifested in odd ways: the readiness, even eagerness, of some sex educators to embarrass reluctant pupils in the classroom to the point of mortification, perplexed the author, and aroused her suspicions.) What then could be wrong with permitting these elements finally to free America's youth from age-old sexual fears and misconceptions?

The major revelation of this book is that, ironically, everyone — foes and mass-supporters of sex education alike — seems to have misunderstood the real intentions of the people behind the idea. To begin with, according to Dr. Mary Calderone, the Director of and prime mover in SIECUS, the organization was started at a conference held in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1961, the proceedings of which were published in a book titled, significantly, *Foundations for a Christian Family Policy*. To Miss Breasted's mind, Dr. Calderone's language in discussing the issue "clearly betrayed a deeply Calvinist view of sex". (Dr. Calderone herself is a Quaker), and she "advocated a sex education that was basically a form of moral indoctrination." This was a position the author encountered again and again among the Pros. Their idea that the "golden moments" of sex were something to be "earned"; their constant invocation, in true YMCA fashion, of illegitimacy and venereal disease as excuses for imparting knowledge about sex; their very use of the term, "the sexual function" — all pointed to this. To take only one example: Paul Cook, the "heroic," beleaguered Superintendant of Schools in Anaheim, replied to the question, would such courses encourage pre-marital sex: "No. On the contrary, the discussion of the hazards of premarital sex activities tends to develop the understanding and awareness young people need to manage their physical desires....We encourage continence and we provide the children with sound, logical, and understandable reasons why premarital sex is a dangerous and self-defeating activity." (It might be that such assertions are part of a Machiavellian attempt to pacify the Antis; but, if so, it would raise even more serious questions about the Pros.)

In point of fact, the orientation of the sex educationists (as shown, for instance, in the Family Life program at Anaheim) was towards instilling in the students a Consciousness II morality — in the sense of Charles Reich — different from Consciousness I, but still hardly "liberated" or "emancipated." It was almost entirely "devoted to lessons in problem-solving *within* the context of the conventional morality." In exposing these values, hidden behind the allegedly value-free aim of providing students with the "facts," Miss Breasted turns the left flank of the sex educationists and gives the libertarian the satisfaction of taking the measure of their vaunted sexual "progessivism." Why the American people should be taxed to subsidize the propagation of such notions it is impossible to say.

The discrepancy between glamorous public image and humdrum reality— between the packaging and selling of sex education and what it actually means and is — comes out in another way as

well. As in most cases where government is called on to furnish what is thought to be a public need, one easily makes the mistake of visualizing how the program once set up will in fact function given theoretically ideal circumstances and personnel, instead of things as they actually are. Federal regulatory commissions, once established, never turn out to be staffed with the bright, dogged champions of the consumer interest who were fantasized at an earlier stage (rather, they turn out to be, in virtually every case, agents of the industry they are supposedly monitoring). As the principle applies in this case: that young people should become sexually less inhibited may be a good thing (in my view, it is). But, not only is that *not* the intention of the sex educators: things as they really are dictate that sex education in the public schools will, as a practical matter, be carried out by middle-class and lower middle-class individuals, with their own inevitable and distinctive limitations and nervousness on the subject. (The director of the Anaheim program was a certain Sally Williams, a school nurse.) Most of them will be the graduates of the teachers colleges in the various states. Miss Breasted gives us a glimpse of what sex education, as it is put into operation, will probably amount to, to judge by what the teachers are being taught. She attended a class at Long Beach State College, aimed at forming the sex educators of tomorrow: "Interpreting the lyrics of Youth Culture, offering the definitions for 'climacteric' and 'frottage,' expounding your own private theories about the modern striver or the varieties of rape; of such fragments was the sex education class for the future 'Family Life' teachers molded together." Gushy liberal types "training hordes of future Ann Landers (or, at best, David Reubens), reinforcing in them all the current cant one has heard a million times over against "materialism" and for "relating to people as people"; talking of "meaningful" relationships in terms that render all human relationships unreal and meaningless; and self-righteously slaying the dragon of "Puritanism," while all the time propagating their own more insidious form of it. The claim that tribute must be levied on the producers of real goods and services in order to fund such stuff is to my mind another one of those ideas that are genuinely puzzling, because they are nearly universally accepted among educated people and yet so obviously false — like that Gore Vidal has a dazzlingly beautiful prose style, or that Galbraith is a witty man.

Two issues of theoretical interest, however, are raised by the controversy which warrant comment; the issue of parental rights, and the whole question of the role of government in molding social values.

That the conscious intention of the sex educationists is to by-pass the parents seems clear, and thus the hysteria the Antis sometimes show is more comprehensible. Consider the fact that, as the author points out, almost no proponent of sex education would favor a plan whereby such courses were made available to *parents*, who then could pass on the "basic information" to their children, but adding their own value judgments (such courses could offer "the findings of modern research," to lessen the implied stigma of ignorance in a parent attending such a course.) Isn't it obvious that the Pros don't *trust* the parents, that they think it necessary to *balance* and *counter* parental influence on this question? But it is only human then that the Antis' intuition of this should produce a sometimes wild and reckless counterattack. For many of them, the situation must have all the makings of a nightmare: a group of government employees, utilizing compulsory school attendance laws and *the parents' own money*, presumes to interpose itself between the parents and their children, in order to correct "backward" and "archaic" sexual attitudes. But, as the author states, what "haunted" her, liberal as she was, as she observed the sex educationists close up, was the very question that the Antis had raised so often: "Who gave *these people* the right to tell us how to raise our children?" Given this, it is possible to forgive the Antis their oc-

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casional silly fantasies and Birchite nastiness.

Where Miss Breasted fails to come to grips with a crucial issue is in relation to the fundamental question of what role the government is entitled to have in education at all. It does not occur to her that the very existence of a controversy over sex education is due to the fact that the government owns and operates schools; this makes what would otherwise be an ordinary *cultural* question (like whether women should wear miniskirts or people should engage in group sex) into a *political* question, where contending sides struggle for control of the state apparatus. It is perfectly analogous to struggles between Catholics and Protestants in the days when the state intervened in religious matters. If state education were abolished, parents and children would decide for themselves, individually, by their choice of schools whether to submit to formal sex education and, if so, of what sort.

Pending the abolition of the government's quasi-monopoly of primary and secondary education (through something like Milton Friedman's voucher plan), sex education should be kept out of the public schools, even in cases where a majority of parents in a district may desire it (since it will virtually always be the case that they would be imposing their wishes on a substantial minority). Even if there were no constitutional problem, it would still be improper for the state to impose religiously oriented courses on students. It is the same with sex education, and for the same reason: it is just not the business of the state and its educational bureaucrats to undertake the molding of social values.

Finally, it is ironic that at a time when intelligent radicals like Ivan Illich are arguing that we must put an end to the delirium of more and more "education" and begin to "de-school society," the prevailing view has come to be that *even sex* must be made the subject of formal, institutionalized learning. The counter-argument of the sex educationists is that the alternative is learning about it "in the streets" (or, when they're being particularly fastidious, in the "gutter"). But that is just the point, since here "the streets" means: in the midst of living life.

But, as indicated at the beginning, the propriety of sex education courses has become axiomatic, to the point where the very possibility of rational opposition is ruled out *a priori*. Favoring sex education is now one more way of inexpensively and harmlessly validating one's own mind-boggling avant-gardism. There is, however, a hopeful note. It may be, as the author tends to believe, that the whole issue is "academic" for young people, that they will not be much influenced in their ultimate attitudes and conduct either by the Antis or the Pros. It may be, in other words, that they will react to the sex educationists much as the youth of Eastern Europe react to the paid purveyors of Marxism-Leninism in the state-owned schools there: by comparing what they are taught with reality as they experience and know it, they will end by simply shrugging their shoulders at the absurdity and irrelevance of the official line.

Ralph Raico

"THE VERY REVEREND *Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, denounced the United States for 'its reckless and fruitless maintenance of the most cruel and unprincipled war in the history of the world.' We are used to such hyperbolic condemnations from clergymen nowadays; but the Dean made this particular statement in 1863, and the war he denounced was the one that ended slavery.*"

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Book Review:

The Peculiar Institution

by Norman Yetman
Holt, Reinhart, & Winston, $4.50

A generation ago, Richard Hofstadter called for the realization that "any history of slavery must be written in large part from the standpoint of the slave." It is perhaps some measure of progress that this point should seem obvious to most present-day readers. When Hofstadter wrote, however, no really satisfactory attempt had been made to address the question: "How did the slaves experience slavery?"

At that time, the field of slavery history was dominated by the work of Ulrich B. Phillips and his students. Phillips was a Georgian who, in two remarkable books and a number of articles, essayed a comprehensive study of the structure of slavery in the ante-bellum South. Although compelled to acknowledge his signal contributions, Phillips' critics have claimed that he failed in several respects, particularly in his treatment of the slaves' response to slavery. Hofstadter argued that the impression which one gets from Phillips' writings is sufficiently close to the slaveholders' view of the slave "as a singularly contented and docile 'serio-comic' creature" to put some justice in the accusation that his work was "a latter-day phase of the pro-slavery argument."

If a scholar who did not share Phillips' preconceptions were to do as intensive a study, Hofstadter asserted, he would arrive at a "materially different version of the slave system." It is perhaps the case that such a scholar, if he restricted himself to Phillips' sources, would have little basis for *any* reliable conclusion about what it was like to be a slave, for Phillips relied primarily on plantation records, and slaveholders' journals and letters. It should be obvious that such sources are poor guides to the attitudes of slaves and to the details of what private lives they could wrest from the system.

The principal reason for slaveholders' inability to testify accurately in these respects is the slaves' early mastery of what sociologists were later to call "impression management", an art universally cultivated by subordinates. Many aspects of everyday life and thought in "the quarters" (particularly those contrary to the white folks' desires and preconceptions) were carefully shielded from observation—sometimes with the aid of magical forces. The shock reported by many slaveholders when "devoted" servants defected to the Union army and the remarkable trust which many runaways reported having exploited are evidence of the success with which some slaves, at least, concealed their real feelings about slavery and "old massa." The more perceptive slaveholders only realized more fully the extent of their ignorance; a South Carolina plantation mistress, for example, often speculated in her journal on what was going on behind the "bronze masks" of her slaves.

A different objection to over-reliance on documents left by slaveholders is that the plantations for which they are available are unrepresentative, "the upper crust of the upper crust." Hofstadter shows that the plantations which Phillips studied were among the largest—over a hundred slaves apiece—and that such slaveholders held only about ten per cent of all slaves and were fewer than one per cent of all slaveholders in the South.

Discussing ways to overcome this bias, Hofstadter suggested greater use of travelers' accounts of the Old South. It is ironic that Phillips had held such accounts suspect partly on the grounds of the atypicality of *their* observations, their inability to "distinguish what was common in the system from what was unique in some special case."

Phillips also distrusted such accounts because he was extremely sensitive to the anti-slavery bias of most such travelers. He felt particularly that those who wrote for publication were "propagandists of one cause and another, and as such set their spectacles upon their readers' noses." (His critics claim Phillips was *too* scrupulous: he did not begin to exploit the exceptional works, such as those of Frederick Law Olmsted, which achieve credibility despite the commitments of their authors.)

As testimony on the experience of slavery, travelers' accounts have still another shortcoming. Such information as travelers gathered must have come, ultimately, from slaves themselves, and here again the disconcerting propensity of slaves to tell the white man what he wanted to hear clouds the evidence. Pro-slavery travelers were inordinately likely to encounter evidence that slaves were generally well-treated and content,

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while abolitionists were likely to be told of terrible suffering and incipient revolt. The anti-slavery writer James Redpath, for instance, while acknowledging that "...the slaves often told me, at first, that they did not care about freedom," reported that "...never yet have I met with one who did not finally confess that he was longing for liberty."

In general, then, documents left us by contemporary whites are at best of uncertain reliability as guides to the slaves' viewpoint. First, the slaves told whites what they thought the whites wanted to hear. Second, the mechanisms which latter-day social scientists have called "selective exposure," "selective perception," "selective interpretation," and "selective retention" operated to ensure that the whites' stereotypes would not be upset. Finally, those partisans who wrote for publication must be suspected of what may be genteelly called "selective reporting," until their innocence is established.

The obvious solution would seem to be to turn to documents left us by Negroes. Needless to say, very few are available written by slaves while enslaved. Most slave states had laws against teaching slaves to read and write, and those who did manage to learn had neither the time nor the inclination to keep journals. The few slave-written letters which are available reveal little of interest to the historian.

The bulk of the material written by Negroes prior to emancipation is in the form of autobiographies (often "ghost-written") and letters by fugitive slaves—not very reliable testimony on the general experience. As recent works on the Underground Railroad have documented, flight was an extremely unusual response to slavery. It is difficult to say whether runaways, in general, had had a worse time of it than other slaves (as many runaways claimed) or a better (as many slaveholders of the "give-'em-an-inch-and-they'll-take-a-mile" school claimed), but it is certain that they felt more strongly the injustice of the situation than did those who stayed put.

If fugitives in general were an atypical lot, how much less typical must have been the characters and experiences of those who chose, and were able, to write about their lives. Moreover, whoever recorded the fugitive's experience, whether himself or an interviewer, was likely to have done so in order to score points in the national debate, and to have selected from the available material accordingly. As Phillips noted in dismissing such sources, "...ex-slave narratives in general...were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authenticity is doubtful."

Fortunately for the historian of slavery, however, there exists a class of sources, not available to Phillips, which furnishes a somewhat more accurate picture of the South's "peculiar institution," as seen from "the standpoint of the slave." In the 1920s, American sociology, dominated by the "Chicago school" of ethnographers, was engaged primarily in detailed description of various American subcultures—the small-town Midwest, the big city Negro ghetto, the underworld of petty thieves, etc. Influenced by this work, with its emphasis on representativeness, accuracy of recording, thoroughness of detail, and avoidance (in principle, at least) of moral judgment, a number of investigators returned (shortly after Phillips' last book was published) to the collection of ex-slaves' narratives. Their aim was not so much to forge these materials into weapons against ideological opponents as simply to record this invaluable source material while it was still available. Although such collections were initiated by academic researchers at Fisk and Southern University, the best known is probably that undertaken by the W.P.A. Federal Writers Project. Ranging over most of the South, this group sought out more than two thousand surviving ex-slaves and recorded *verbatim* their recollections of everyday life under slavery, of the war, and of emancipation. The transcripts of these interviews have been used extensively by later historians, and excerpts have been published as *Lay My Burden Down*.

In *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution,"* Norman Yetman has brought together over a hundred of these narratives, in their entirety, and from them the general reader can begin to piece together for himself an answer to the question of what it was like to be a slave. Those with strong preconceptions will not be happy with this evidence, for the picture is one of great variety—in situation and in response. The question of whether slaves were content—which many contemporary controversialists viewed as crucial—seems not to be answerable in general. There are slaves here who see their masters as sadistic tyrants, and others who see them as benevolent Christian autocrats; there is seething resentment and genuine devotion; docile compliance alternates with foot-dragging and sabotage.

When slaves report satisfaction with their situation, the basis for this satisfaction is worth examining. Most often, it seems, slaves assessed their well-being by comparing their lot with that of slaves on nearby establishments. A slave who was content reports: "When we would look and see how the slaves on the joining farm was farming, 'twould almost make us shed tears;" while one who was disgruntled tells us: "Now, Old Marster Goforth had four sisters what owned slaves, and they wasn't mean to them like our Old Marster and Old Mistress." An indictment of the slavery system could be based on the extent to which it restricted the slaves' grounds for comparison. (In fact, Richard Wade argues that slavery was incompatible with city life partly because the urban scene provided more varied reference points—in the form of free Negroes and poor whites—than did the countryside.) As one of the ex-slaves here puts it: "If I had my life to live over again, I would die fighting rather than be a slave. I don't want no man's yoke on my shoulders no more. But

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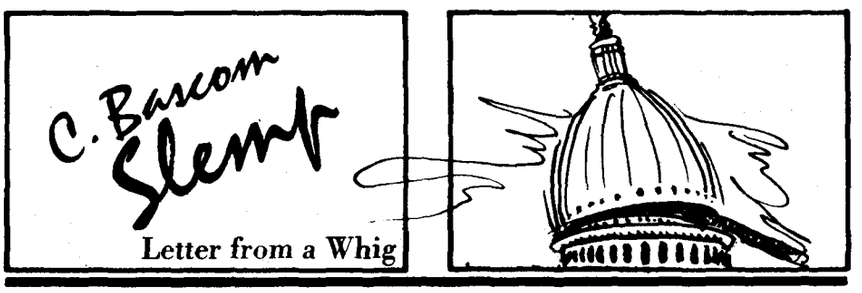
in them days, us niggers didn't know no better."

Yetman has supplemented these reminiscences with a fine essay on the history of the Slave Narrative Collection, with an even-handed discussion of possible bias in the selection of ex-slaves to be interviewed, with a description of how he chose these narratives for this volume, and with photographs of almost painful poignancy. There is also an appendix listing each interviewer on the project and his race, a valuable aid to assessing the reliability of these reports. If, as students of public opinion polling have demonstrated, white interviewers still lead black respondents to distort their reported attitudes, one can imagine the effects on ex-slaves in the South in the 1930s. One should be rightly skeptical of a report like the one (quoted in *Lay My Burden Down* which concluded: "...all in all, white folks, then was the really happy days for us niggers." The camouflage taken on in slavery times was apparently still functioning two-thirds of a century after emancipation.

Of course these narratives are not without their own drawbacks as evidence on the experience of slavery. As the editor of another collection of ex-slave testimony reminds us: "The passing of the years, the early age of witnesses at the time, and the bitterness against the institution of slavery might be arguments against the historical accuracy of everything which follows," and, moreover, the reader must beware the tendency to remember the unusual rather than the mundane. Even outright fantasy sometimes appears in these accounts. By and large, however, a discerning reader can weigh the whole of an individual narrative and arrive at some judgment of the narrator's credibility and reliability. A surprising proportion of these narratives are coherent, detailed descriptions of life in slavery, recorded as delivered by those who knew it best.

John Shelton Reed



Jean Westwood and the Mob

(WASHINGTON)—George McGovern's defeat on November 7th weakened the very foundations on which his party stands. The results cannot be viewed simply as a personal defeat for him, but must be seen instead as a popular repudiation of the new Democratic party and the philosophy behind it.

For forty years the Democratic leadership has been able to count on the South, the poor, and the laboring man. In addition, national and local Democratic candidates could almost always rely on the loyalty of the various ethnic blocs that dominate many crucial states.

But they can't anymore. The erosion began in the early sixties and reached a high point four years ago when millions of normally Democratic voters deserted their party to vote for a third party candidate more to their liking — or for a man who had for a decade been viewed by most of them as representative of everything wrong with the Republican party.

Thus, the signs were there in 1968 and at least a few people read them correctly. Analyst Kevin Phillips, for example, began writing and talking about an "emerging Republican majority" and White House political advisors began trying to figure out how to appeal to dissident Democrats in the South and elsewhere.

Whether Richard Nixon's strategists and managers could have done it alone is debatable, but as it turned out they didn't have to. George McGovern's people arrived on the scene as if ordered up by Nixon's people themselves to help shatter the old Democratic coalition and drive millions of confused but normally Democratic voters into the President's hands.

The seriousness of the situation in which the Democratic party now finds itself is apparent from an analysis of last November's election results. The President polled millions of votes that have never before gone to a Republican candidate. Unless the leaders of the Democratic party can do something about the inroads he made they are likely to find themselves in charge of an empty shell with little support outside Manhattan except in urban ghettos and on college campuses.

The results tell the story. No Republicans had ever won majority support from America's Catholics, but Richard Nixon carried 56 percent of them this time. He polled 65 percent of the Italian vote, an increase of 25 points since 1968, and carried this important ethnic bloc for the first time.

And, nearly 5 percent of those voters who went for Wallace in 1968 cast their lot with Richard Nixon this time.

These results must have shaken McGovern's managers as well as those interested in the future of the Democratic party. They represent both a repudiation of McGovern radicalism and a disquieting willingness to abandon partisan allegiances of long standing.

The fact that traditional Democrats were able to hold on at the state and local level can't even have eased the pain for the true believers. Many of them won only because they vociferously disavowed McGovern and his policies — and others made it because of a low turnout which — this time — favored Democrats. Had the President personally been more popular and if he had really gone after Senate and House seats, the results might have proven even more disastrous for the Democrats.

As it is, they must live with the knowledge that Democrats willing to cross over at the national level today might well elect Republicans at other levels tomorrow. This is precisely why many "traditional" Democrats are fighting so desperately to take the party back from the radical fringe that seized it in Miami. They know that if they don't, things could get much worse.

But the traditionalists won't be able to take it back because the McGovernites aren't about to give it to them and they hold most, if not all, the cards.

The party then is in a real box. McGovernism has apparently been repudiated, but McGovern's people are in control of the party. They control the national committee and the machinery in many states. They may be willing to accept cosmetic changes like the replacement of an identified radical such as Jean Westwood at the chairman's level, but they are not about to abandon control of the party they fought for and won between 1968 and 1972.

And they aren't about to sell out their principles either, for they are — as has already been noted — true believers. They would like to win, but some things are more important to them than winning.

They will compromise only to the extent that they might fall in behind someone who agrees with them, but gets along with the Richard J. Daley's of the world. Edward Kennedy, of course, is such a man.

And the traditionalists — less wedded to principle than the desire to wield power — could go along with him because they see Kennedy as a man who can win in spite of his views on the issues.

The irony is that they appear to be right about Kennedy. He has managed during the course of the last several years to stake out for himself a position far to the left of a majority of his colleagues in the Senate and his supporters in his party. Indeed, on many issues he can be found somewhere to the left even of George McGovern.

But he might be able to win in spite of himself if he can cloud his positions on the issues and ride on the family name. The Republicans and his enemies within the Democratic party, on the other hand, can be expected to try to pin him to his positions — to point out publicly that he and McGovern represent the same wing of the party. If they can succeed Kennedy and his party will both be in serious trouble.

For the President appears to want to force the issue. He and his people are

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already talking about a "new American Majority" and seem intent upon consolidating political gains made on November 7th both by putting together programs specifically designed to appeal to this majority and by reducing or eliminating "bloated government bureaucracy."

If there is a strategy directed against Kennedy, then, it might make sense for the Republicans to force him to stand up in the Senate as a defender of the Great Society welfare programs that have led to so much dissatisfaction within our society. Should this happen and should Kennedy emerge as a defender of the discredited welfarism that sunk McGovern, the President will have successfully removed a major roadblock in the way of building a "new American (and, incidentally, perhaps Republican) Majority."

Book Review:

Metaphors of Self

— The Meaning of Autobiography
by James Olney
Princeton University, $12.50

However dull, however tedious, however uninteresting our own, about the lives of others we are insatiably avid of facts. Hence the timeless allure of even atrociously poor biography, with its too smoothly-spinning narrative, elephantine length, and seemingly inexhaustible supply of facts. We salvage all — bits and scraps of clandestine letters, rumored peccadilloes, the itineraries of foreign travel, tales of chronic dyspepsia (and worse), yellowing laundry tickets, the glittering repartee of evenings now only half-legibly inscribed in mouldering journals, countless dates, events both memorable and trivial — hoping to draw from such collections as these a metaphysical (if ultimately deceptive) comfort, hoping against hope that somewhere amid this hoarded debris we may discover the secret unity of self, that substantiality and solidity of personality so plainly evident in the lives of others, and so despairingly elusive in our own. On these grounds even the worst biography pleads extenuation. The attraction of bad biography is best exemplified by a famed nineteenth-century biographer who, lamenting the ubiquity of grossly sentimental, commemorative biographies with which his countrymen pretended to reverence their dead, was forced to concede that however painful to him their "lack of selection, of detachment, of design," so far as the common reader was concerned, "their ill-digested masses of material" really did comfort and console. For no matter how short such hack productions seemed to fall of the ideal of biography — a lucid disclosure of the shape of self by "compressing into a few shining pages the manifold existences of men" — they could still offer the minimal consolations of fiction: sharply-etched characters and effortlessly unfolding plots surrounded by a reasoned universe of order, limit, and finitude, and these in surprising abundance.

Unquestionably, autobiography affords us no such easy consolations; it neither blandishes nor reassures. From the start, its aim is wholly divergent from that of biography, if it is not its generally acknowledged antagonist. Biography samples real life deliberately through the wrong end of a telescope: it distances and simplifies, selects and omits, clarifies and solidifies. Autobiography reverses the focus, redirecting the instrument at ourselves *from within*, obscuring if not blotting out entirely our characteristic social selves which are visible only externally — appearance, gesture, role, class, and speech — and thus bringing our personalities under our own introspective gaze. Suddenly, our solid identities begin to dissolve into handfuls of words, tags, and empty labels which try in vain to capture and fix our own sense of unique particularity. Having lost hold of our sense of solid identity because we no longer view it from without, our self seems to come disconnected, to multiply into an array of selves as we search helplessly for a thread on which to rejoin our past and future. Freud regarded these symptoms as a form of hysteria, citing the case of a woman who obsessively complained that "it was as though her life was chopped in pieces." Strikingly similar is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's allusion to men who "have ceased to look back on their selves with joy and tenderness. They exist in fragments." More recent is the query of D.H. Lawrence, foreshadowing our preoccupation with role-playing, identity crises, and transformations of self: "I am many men.... Who are you? How many selves have you? And which of these selves do you want to be?" But in our time it was Jean Paul Sartre who, though caught up in the extremities of his own case ("I am cast out, forsaken in the present: I vainly try to rejoin the past: I cannot escape") realized that in fact these symptoms occur universally, are part of the basic human condition. He went on to imply that, paradoxically, relief for the common man lay in a careful avoidance (however damnable from another point of view) of the autobiographic impulse to introspect, to become increasingly self-conscious, and at least a possible acceptance of a contingent self, a self immersed in process, a self definable only as continuous change with no constitutive core and no stable past. He well understood that the more we employ "biographical optics" (looking through the wrong end of the figurative telescope) to ponder the order apparent in the lives of others, the more liable we are to feel cheated by our own.

Introspection and instability exist, at least for most of us, in direct proportion to each other: by focusing on distant goals and ends we can avoid at least partially the uncertainties of the present. Momentum is all — to pause is to falter. The reflective glance, the examination of self is an invitation to doubt, paralysis, disaster. For most of us, the best life is that lived in placid disregard (if not outright defiance) of the classical exhortation: "Know Thyself!" Most importantly, however, Sartre conceded at least implicitly that "pure" autobiography was impossible and that a pitched and uninterrupted awareness of the flux and change of our lives, our bodies, and our existence would prove a nightmare beyond description. For this reason, all autobiography may be said to harbor an internal and irreconcilable conflict: trying to fulfill its theoretical aims of introspection and self-scrutiny while at the same time trying to satisfy our urge to become detached spectators of ourselves — to view ourselves both from a vantage point outside our bodies (as others view us), and outside the reaches of time itself. Autobiography becomes flawed by the inexorable human desire to escape into a world of fiction. And perhaps the chief consolation which fiction alone affords — a lucid disclosure of the shape of self by "compressing into a few shining pages the manifold existences of men" — may help to explain the timeless magic of biography. For like humanity itself, autobiography in its fallen state aspires to the condition of biography.

This far-reaching insight and its consequences for psychology, philosophy, and aesthetics is among the central tenets of James Olney's *Metaphors of Self*, a brilliantly conceived, immensely detailed, and eloquently written account of the nature and meaning of autobiography. "For it is impossible," Olney begins by quoting the words of A.M. Clark, "for a man to get out of his skin." Indeed, that would be the same as "an autobiographer (trying to give) a view of himself from without." And grounded in this remarkable observation is the critical distinction that Olney succeeds in drawing between two "large and loose groups" of autobiography: on the one hand, "autobiography simplex" or "autobiography of the single metaphor," and, on the other, "autobiography duplex" or "autobiography of the double metaphor." Autobiography simplex, the first group, might equally well have been dubbed autobiography as valediction (or autobiography as farewell), since into this category fall autobiographers (Olney dwells at length on George Fox, Charles Darwin, John Henry Newman, and John Stuart Mill) who regard their "autobiographic perceptions" as taking place *ex post facto*, often celebrating and pondering repeatedly the single outstanding event or occurrence responsible for the radical disjunction of past self from present. Each of these men, dissimilar in so many ways, were yet alike in that "all, in one way or another, tried to get out of their skins, tried to separate entirely their former from their present

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selves and to relate the events of a lifetime as if the relation were, or could be, after the fact." Autobiography as valediction is structured around an elaborate bidding farewell to a finished past, a formal act of leave-taking, a ritual sanctioning of passage into an achieved — and thus, for the most part, static and ahistorical — selfhood. Perhaps for that reason Darwin ("I am not conscious of any change in my mind during the last thirty years.") and Mill ("From this time. . .I have no further mental changes to tell of.") and Newman ("From the time that I became a Catholic, of course, I have no further history of my religious opinions to narrate.") sound remarkably similar. And from their own accounts it is apparent that each "reached a clearly defined end point in development, a specific date beyond which there was no change but only more of the same; that in each case, this date came well before the composition of the autobiography; and that again, in each case, it was a partial, not a whole, evolution that ceased — development of a scientific or religious faculty."

To Olney's second broad rubric — "autobiography duplex" or "autobiography of the double metaphor" — might be affixed the further tentative gloss of autobiography as discovery, or autobiography as becoming, since here autobiography no longer serves either to celebrate an act of severence or detachment, or to serve as the vehicle for its accomplishment, but rather symbolizes and participates in a constantly renewing acceptance of and surrender to the felt real, ever in the process of becoming, never finally halted until, theoretically, the moment of our death. But there now arises a problem not simply of trying to gauge the validity of a procedure that defines new categories by a simple inversion of old ones, though some of the characteristics Olney now proposes for "autobiography duplex" — "The acceptance of 'his own skin,' of its being *his* skin, always around him but around nobody else, and acceptance of all the subjectivity that that implies is (its) most distinctive sign" and secondly, that in "autobiography duplex" there "would be change and development" until either the implications of ones lifework are exhausted or admit of no further development — are clearly the antithesis of the first. The real problem arises in trying to puzzle out the full range of possible implications involved in the ideal conception of autobiography as discovery when we try to measure that luminous ideal against three figures (Montaigne, C.G. Jung, and T.S. Eliot) chosen as its embodiments.

Certainly one of the most significant and, mercifully, concise discussions of this elusive ideal (or, at least, one very closely resembling the ideal sketched by Olney) is to be found scattered throughout the writings of Ortega y Gasset. To begin with, there is the expected exhortation to forego the escapist consolations of fiction, to maintain an openness of outlook and commitment in regard to all the systems and philosophies which, throughout our life, compete for our belief: "To be free means to be lacking in constitutive identity, not to have subscribed to a determined being, to be able to be other than what one was, to be unable to install oneself once and for all in any given being. The only attribute of the fixed, stable being in the free being is this constitutive instability." According to Ortega, however, the honest acceptance and surrender to our lot of radical freedom need prompt neither hysteria nor the shocks of disorientation; on the contrary, Ortega regards its inevitable corollary as a recognition that it is up to the human imagination itself to forge the overarching scenarios in which we dwell and the succession of goals which, throughout the course of a lifetime, we tentatively embrace:

"Man invents for himself a program of life, a static form of being, that gives a satisfactory answer to the difficulties posed for him by circumstance. He essays this form of life, attempts to realize this imaginary character he has resolved to be. But meanwhile the experience has made apparent shortcomings and limits of the said program of life. It does not solve all the difficulties, and creates new ones of its own. With the back view its inadequacy is straightway revealed. Man thinks out another program of life."

But surely, it will be objected, is it so easy a matter to acknowledge the shortcomings and inadequacies of our "programs of life" (either those we shape personally or those we accept from society), to withdraw our deep belief from, say, one religion or philosophy or view of life, casting around with stoic forbearance until we hit upon another, more satisfactory formulation? Is belief a commodity that admits simultaneously of unquenchable devotion and skeptical appraisal? Are the words of a famous Romantic thinker — "It is equally fatal intellectually to have a system and to have none. One must decide to combine both" — applicable to even a heroic minority of men or do they portray an ideal ultimately unrealizable in human affairs? Certainly the cases of Jung, Eliot, and Montaigne raise vital questions concerning the underlying human costs of adherence to such divided ideals. There is no questioning the fact that works of autobiography (whether static testaments to the past or monuments to unflagging openness) and larger systems of belief or philosophic elucidations are both ultimately metaphoric elaborations, reflecting an underlying (if often invisible) point of view. Some controversy has surrounded the claim that Jung's work is truly "science," but however outlandish his formal writings appear (and the same attitude of stark incomprehensibility laced with pity is extremely prevalent when we turn from T.S. Eliot's poetry to his writings on culture and religion), it may be that they provided for Jung (as Eliot's writings did for him) a distinctly "simplex" or fixed conception of reality which in turn afforded an underlying security so vitally necessary to the full acceptance by each man of a more fluid, more open, more complexly uncertain notion of self that only then could be chronicled and explored through the medium of autobiography as process.

Despite several of my own differences of opinion (whether, for example, Jung, as Olney would claim, is not a scientist, or whether Montaigne is in fact a true paradigm for modern man), this volume is a distinguished achievement in almost every respect. And given the critical depredations suffered by T.S. Eliot's poetry at the hands of insensitive critics with little if any interest in poetry *per se*, Olney's remarkable chapter on the *Four Quartets* — with its deft and skillful elucidation of complexity and detail, with its felicitous observation that "recapitulation" and "recurrence" of poetic elements in diverse contexts must be accounted a key principle of structure in any literature that strives to mediate between static form and dynamic process, and with its staunch recognition that complexity or difficulty in modern art simply mirrors the condition of life as we find it ("The surest symptom of decadent art," wrote another critic in

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The Bootblack Stand

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at *avant-garde* bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled *What's in It for Me?* Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

How come it is that you guys are always tearing things down? Why can't you build something up? Why can't you find something nice to say? Why don't you talk about what is right with America?

Cordially,
George Romney

Dear Mr. Romney:

Well let me begin by saying that I am not writing about America. I write about Washington, and I write about things as they are. But it seems to me that a cogent case can be made for inveighing against everything and everyone. A lot of people waste an enormous amount of energy looking for a few specks of gold in a bucket of sand. As a result they lose touch. They begin to dream of great buckets of gold populated with but a few specks of sand. And they begin to confuse their dreams with reality. Soon they think that the fellow over the hill has a bucket of gold. They become sour about their condition. And if they continue to think rather than to take up drink or pouting they are but two leaps in logic from confecting notions of communism, facism, or Consciousness III.

Bah! The truth is that no one has a bucket of gold. Not even the fellow with a smile and a few specks less sand. Everyone lives in his own kind of misery and fundamentally has a miserable time of it. The man who reminds us of it is the man who keeps us from the mischief of the dreamers. And if he does it with style he can keep us reasonably happy. If I neglect to run on effusively about a few specks of gold, it is because I cannot neglect the vast abundance of sand. Neither should you. If you were not confused by a few flicks of gold, you might never have made the stupid statements you have made these last few years.

—GWP

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

Ever since I became California's junior senator I have brought my office to the people. The people like this, for the government should be brought to the people every now and again. After all, think of what government brings from the people? A government that asks not what of the people merely escalates human misery and compassion.

Those who make change improbable make impossible changes irreplaceable. In the distance I see all of God's citizens close to government and me close to them.

As part of my dream to bring people closer to government and to me I would like to get on the Johnny Carson Show. Could you advise me as to how I can fulfill my dream?

Cordially,
Senator John Tunney

Dear Senator Tunney:

You startle me. I am a political adviser not a magician, nevertheless I have set my agents to this task. They tell me that we might be able to get you on stage as a guest, but after extensive consultations with the Carson staff, there is no chance of getting you into the audience. According to a spokesman for the Carson staff, the Carson Show must maintain its standards. Though you are a veritable fountain of foolishness, ever to be counted on for a nonsensical statement or a silly gesture, putting you in the audience would be simply too risky. You are not the kind of person to be put in an audience. Perhaps you are too intellectual. Try the Dick Cavett show.

— GWP

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the same vein, "is that it leaves nothing to the imagination; the Muse has bared her flabby bosom like a too-obliging harlot — there is no veiled promise, no mystery, nothing to divine.") — must in itself be ranked a minor masterpiece.

Indeed, *Metaphors of Self* is really a prolegomenon to that vaster undertaking which is yet to be written and impossible to write: an account of the *poetics of process* or history of the human imagination — that basic (perhaps tragic) human impulse to frame metaphors (be they poetic flights of "as if" or ponderous tomes of systematic philosophy) as a way of probing the mystery around us, as a means, in the words of Paul Weiss, of securing a "static image" or "temporarily arrested sample" or an "ongoing dynamic process." The abiding message of *Metaphors of Self* is, I think, that before the challenge of a universe in process — a universe of tragic uncertainty and bleak prospect — both aesthetics and poetics are jointly confronted by a new mode of literature whose task is not simply "to discover truth and to present it, but to pursue and to create it, and not to create it outside the pursuit but within it. And in his re-creation, the reader, in effect, becomes the pursuit, the pondering, the process, the poem."

Alan Weinblatt

WEAVER

(continued from page 4)

himself. As the vanguard becomes more extreme, it does not reject the earlier "reformist" elements of its case, since these remain an effective means of drawing people to the movement. At this point, a new set of critics enter. They often accept a reformist definition of the problem, but vehemently attack its revolutionary and nihilist redefinitions, the spirit of reaction which intends them, and the movement as a whole, which is now defined by them. The critics are themselves attacked in turn for creating straw men, for ignoring the diversity of the movement, and for being indifferent to real injustices and problems. Eventually, once the movement is dead and gone, the critics are rehabilitated and celebrated for their courageous defense of human values against radical extremism, nihilism, and totalitarianism.

Today we live in an age of movements, and perhaps there is no need to illustrate the foregoing observations. Certainly the above phenomena are within the recent experience of us all. But for the skeptics, evidence comes to hand in the form of a recent series of reviews of two brilliant critics of modern intellectual movements. One of these is George Orwell, who in the 1940s inveighed so lucidly against the totalitarian aspects of Stalinism and whose recent treatment in the review media exemplifies the case of the celebrated critic of the extinct and discredited movement. The other is Midge Dector, author of *The New Chastity and Other Arguments Against Womens Liberation*, whose notices conform precisely to the pattern postulated for the critic of the movement at the height of its influence and zeal.

Midge Decter's book is quite simply one of the very best works of social and political criticism to be published in this country in the past dozen years. It is a single long essay whose purpose is to locate, through textual analysis, the essential position of women's liberation as expressed by the movement's leaders and ideologists. The book's brilliance lies in the seriousness and sobriety with which it is written, and the complexity and care of Decter's exegesis of women's liberation doctrine, and above all in the extraordinary lucidity and comprehensiveness of the understanding she conveys. It is not, contrary to some reviewers' implication, a polemic. It is solidly in the genre of serious criticism.

Midge Decter argues that, as the movement's leaders have defined their cause, women's liberation in its current form represents a desire to escape from freedom, opportunity, maturity, and biology. As such, it is in Decter's view regressive or reactionary rather than

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progressive and enlightening. As she analyzes the movement's claims concerning work, sex, the family, and motherhood, she discovers in each instance that the underlying impulse is the consuming hatred for, and denial of, the bedrock dimensions of the human condition. This is not to say, as Decter repeats again and again, that a woman's movement *must* be an expression of such self-hatred, or that women today face no injustices; it is only that *this* movement, at this time, appears to have committed itself to a position that, when properly understood, amounts to nothing more than nihilism.

The critical reaction to this clear and humane book, to which the above paragraphs do not do justice, has not been exactly enthusiastic. On the contrary, the book has generally been received in a spirit of irritation and resistence. The reviews seem to fall more or less neatly into two categories. First, there have been several reviews which amount to nothing more than an effort to total deunciation and disparagement, using whatever blunt critical weapons may be at hand. Such reviews insist that you can't generalize about movements (although the members of the movement are permitted to generalize freely about themselves in the society as a whole), that the book is abominably written, that it totally falsifies the movement's intention, and so on and on through a litany of abuse in which the only constant is the reviewers' refusal to consider Decter's arguments and show how and why they are wrong.

The other sort of review is very different in its overt appearance, but similar in its underlying stance. Its theme is evasive praise. Reviews of this sort seem at least respectful, and sometimes favorable, and indeed they have had kind words to say for one or another of the books undoubted virtues and strengths. But in the end they too finally evade the question of whether Decter's argument is right or wrong, applicable or inapplicable, because they conclude that the book is worthwhile chiefly as an extreme counterweight to another extremist position. These reviews pretend to praise the work, but the nature of the praise implicitly denies the truth of Decter's arguments.

But then, that is precisely the sort of reaction one would expect of a book that so forcefully demolishes one of the day's most popular movements; if there is anything surprising about Decter's critical reception, it is that it has been, in so many cases, so restrained. (On this score, though, one may entertain the suspicion that it is only simple male hostility to women's liberation that has moderated the ire of the movement's supporters.) Even so, predictable or not, the reaction is a minor scandal: it is always a scandal when intellectuals refuse to acknowledge intellectual excellence and to confront the results of careful analysis.

If there is any consolation in all this, it is to be found in the implications of the recent, adulatory essays and reviews of George Orwell. Orwell, of course, was a brilliant critic of the last generation's reactionary movement. In his day he was the subject of considerable abuse and disparagement; indeed, things got so bad for him that three publishers turned down his famous (and best selling) *Animal Farm* for purely political reasons. But Stalinism has long since been discredited, partly through Orwell's own efforts; and so today we all feel free to acknowledge his undoubted honesty and the clarity and humaneness of his writing. Perhaps this too will be the eventual fate of Midge Decter's book on women's liberation; if so, it will deserve it, for it is a no less worthy and humane statement.

And perhaps these reviews of Decter and Orwell offer another reassurance as well. For they remind us that the intellectual community, however faddish and given to excess, is never altogether monolithic; that those who have been most isolated from the intellectual fashions of their time have, in their adversity, been moved to do some of the finest writing and criticism of our century; and eventually these works are recovered, are read, and attain their rightful place as models to be emulated by thoughtful, honest, and humane persons.

Movie Review:

Lap Dogs

There are films like *The Ruling Class*, so bitingly pungent, so wittily acid in good moments, that one almost forgives, but not forgets, the pervasive obstinacy of theme: in that current Peter O'Toole movie, the wickedness of the upper crust, hammered home to last and last. Then there are films like Luis Bunuel's 29th and latest, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, infused with the same message, but here slid into the viewer's consciousness off-handedly, casually, practically politely, and — Bunuel's generous touch of genius — with bull's-eye effectiveness. If the Spanish exile's loathing of the ruling classes has tempered somewhat in recent years, it has been augmented by a maturer disdain: these spoiled sickly infantile reptiles, he is saying; these lovely, over-refined predators; these despoilers of mankind, how attractively they dine, how *sensible* their appreciation of wines and (this reviewer's own public vice) very dry martinis, well-stirred; how grotesque their misplaced priorities, under the glittery perfect smiles. Yes, the rich are different, they do have more money, and, Bunuel insists, their pastimes are infinitely more dangerous.

Some viewers will remember Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) and will remark the familiar touches of discontinuity and mystery, while noting the unobtrusiveness of these tricky devices in Bunuel's *Discreet Charm* as compared to the near-impossibility of comprehension wrought by Resnais' distracting use of them. Others may recall Bunuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962), in which guests at a dinner party were prevented by their own fantastic volitions from leaving, ever, and in which Bunuel's hostility to the dominant class was expressed much more bitterly than in *Discreet Charm*. Keeping in mind the technique of *Marienbad* and the pervasiveness of Bunuel's object of derision, as portrayed most effectively in *Exterminating Angel* (and also in various other Bunuel films, like *Belle de Jour*, 1966), makes for a heightened appreciation of the film under discussion here; but seen as well without previous familiarity either with Bunuel or *Marienbad*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* is a treat available to anyone willing to invest a little effort in the process of viewing.

The "story" is slight, nearly formless. Five Parisians and their friend, ambassador of a squalid banana republic called Miranda, engage in a series of unconsummated attempts at eating together, one successful and one frustrated go at having sex, and a few ambles along a country road. *Time*'s Jay Cocks nicely interpreted the repeated scene along the country road as a linking device weaving together what he calls a "miniature *Decameron*"; I can do no better in describing that vignette. Bunuel here presents not the physically golden Beautiful People beloved by Antonioni, but, rather, two corpulent and one rather slimy gentlemen and three attractive but by no means wholly delightsome ladies, decked out in their nicely tailored clothes, setting about their business: eating and drinking. The men are also engaged in drug traffic, the ambassador (Fernando Rey, who was into the same bag in *The French Connection*) bringing heroin into France in his diplomatic pouch, his friends Thevenot (Paul Frankeur) and Senechal (Jean-Pierre Cassel) taking it off his hands for distribution, no doubt, to the oppressed masses. The women, one supposes, know nothing or at least care nothing about heroin or the men's involvement with it. Mme. Senechal (Stephane Audran) cares about giving elegant dinners and making it with Senechal; Thevenot's wife (Delphine Seyrig) loves pants-suits and the idea of an affair with the ambassador, and her younger sister (Bulle Ogier) would love to love dry martinis but can't keep them down.

Uncompleted dinner and lunch parties follow each other relentlessly, interrupted by a night in jail, a confrontation with a ghost, a young soldier imposing himself upon the ladies in a tea room to tell his sad story of childhood woe, a murder or two, rides in luxurious

(continued on page 24)

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Correspondence

To the Editor:

It was very interesting to read the book review on **The New Totalitarians** by Roland Huntford in your October issue. But, frankly, I got quite astonished. The way Roland Huntford and reviewer Kenneth Paul Shorey seem to have understood the development in Sweden during the last decade is very strange.

Non-Scandinavian westerners like Huntford and Shorey are often aware of the fact that the situation in Sweden today is deplorable. But in their analysis of it they try to find a specific Swedish "state of mind" or a national vice.

I think this is the way many people, e.g., in the United States, have come to the belief that the Swede is living in his "spiritual desert" because of some sexual emancipation or sex revolution. Even if such a statement were true (I personally regard it as a myth, though), it cannot be the whole truth about why the Swede has been duped the way he has.

The **New Leftist attack on Sweden in the middle** of the 60s proved itself very successful. Step by step the revolutionaries seized power of the state-owned monopoly radio and TV company. Soon they controlled not only the student majority, but also the whole educational system in most of our universities. This meant that almost 100 percent of the journalists today are communists. The creation of two extra Communist parties and infiltration within the non-Communist parties changed the political climate completely.

The result today is: Sweden, once a peaceful, withdrawn, and rather conservative country, has become a place where no paper dares to make a pro-American statement (e.g., that the U.S.A. is a democracy); where our "neutrality" allows the government to send nearly $100,000,000 (a gigantic amount in Sweden) to Hanoi; where the television broadcasts anti-American "hatred programs" that quite resemble those described in George .Orwell's **1984** day after day.

This only gets more and more macabre. Two conservative MPs that were foolish enough to imply that they believed that North Vietnam had invaded South Vietnam last Easter were told by a party colleague in Parliament to shut up.

The label "New Totalitarians" is very suitable on people who slowly are made to love a system that makes themselves insane. We have seen many ways in which the communists have seized power and established totalitarianism in Europe. But this is perhaps the smartest ever invented.

Sweden is not an experiment in sexual emancipation, it is an experiment in establishing dictatorship. And the two are very slightly related.

Sincerely,
Anders Enhamre
Stockholm, Sweden

To the Editor:

Congratulations on your October issue in general and on David Osterfeld's article in particular!

I realize I am "carrying coals to Newcastle" in suggesting that two minor amplifications of what is said in the latter's second and third full paragraphs in the third column on page 21 just might prove helpful in some dialogue on the subject.

First, the unearned increased wage, which puts the marginal producers out of business, may not always necessitate an immediate drop in production or increased industry price. The volume shifted from the marginal producers to the few remaining most efficient producers may temporarily absorb enough overhead — or may justify some very quickly available advance in equipment to "lengthen the arms" and cut the number of the now overpaid workers so that prices may not have to be immediately raised nor production immediately cut. However, this is so temporary a state that Mr. Osterfeld's case is still good.

Second, where price controls are used to satisfy the political necessity of squeezing profit and they always are there is an effect in addition to those the writer covers. This is the progressive disappearance of the industry's bottom-priced items which controls always cause through disrupting and reducing the output of the very goods most wanted and needed by lower-income citizens. That history is running true to form in this respect is seen in the auto makers severely thinning the bottom of their 1973 lines and emphasizing the proliferation of the models at the next step up the price scale where some profit is still possible.

Congratulations again to both you and Mr. Osterfeld.

Yours,
Lemuel R. Boulware
New York, N.Y.

To the Editor:

I must tell you how much I enjoyed your editorial in the October issue. While all the country's so-called leading journalists are tripping all over themselves trying to analyze the McGovern phenomenon, you lightly (and correctly, to my mind) dismiss him as the fool he is. But must you use so many big words?

Sally Ward,
Cleveland, Ohio

To the Editor:

I must tell you how simply dreadful your October editorial was. Whether you like it or not, George McGovern and his ideas have become a serious force in American politics, and you are performing a grave disservice to your readers when you dismiss him with alleged humor. One of the major problems with people like you is that you fail to come to grips with reality, and instead of arguing the merits of the case you always resort to **ad hominum** arguments.

The major achievement of the McGovern candidacy is that he is attempting to bring moral leadership to the country, and this is the one issue which conservatives consistently are unable to comprehend. Perhaps you are all too busy counting your money to take the time to try to understand a higher level of thought.

Mark Morrison
Madison, Wisconsin

To the Editor:

I am currently a freshman at North Texas State University, and my feelings upon receiving your magazine are those of a sanitation worker caught in a sewer who stumbles upon a gas mask. Praise be to you for the work that you are doing.

Sincerely,
Kevin Mayfield
Denton, Texas

To the Editor:

I don't know how we got on it in the first place, but I would greatly appreciate your removing WJBL from your mailing list. The volume of trash we throw out every week is big enough as it is.

Very truly yours,
John M. Windover
News Editor
Holland, Michigan

To the Editor:

Yore magazine have made my day. After a long day at the floor sweeping the plant, it are enjoyable to relax to the truth. To tell you, I don't like being back at the Ford Plant after so many years in competition. You will be glad to no that Seymor Stanslokozana is still carrying the colors of the Detroit Brush Club high and swept all the world titles last year. Well, thats all from hear.

Peace,
Ador Stanakowski
Washington, D.C.

Calvin Coolidge

A New Assessment

by Donald R. McCoy

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Mr. Republican

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by James T. Patterson

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—George Nathan

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LAP DOGS

(continued from page 22)

autos to and from excursions to eat or make love. Filling in the gaps: a bishop who works as the Senechals' gardener, a colonel who insults and is shot by the ambassador, a comely young terrorista who tries to kill but is instead fondled and disarmed (and in the end betrayed) by the ambassador, and other moments light and dark, fabulous and mundane, real or dreamed.

Bunuel slides actuality into and out of fantasy with the sureness of Spitz breast-stroking. He evidently cannot make an error: you will search in vain for a recent movie so true to life in color, set, detail, yet so cleverly ambiguous in delineating the actual and the imagined. On a technical level, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* is, quite simply, perfect. Bunuel's timing is a marvel; each scene takes just enough minutes, no more, no less; each flip from the plausible to the obviously (or is it?) unimaginable (or imagined but unlikely) reveals the orchestrations of a cinema master. An example: the six are invited by the colonel (Claude Pieplu) to his home for dinner. They pull up in their limousines, are ushered into an elegant but faded dining room, there served chicken by a waiter who drops the birds — they bounce — picks them up, plops them on plates — they bounce again — at which point the curtain opens and our friends find themselves on a stage, characters playing before a packed house. From the prompter's well come their lines, which two of the men try to say, as the others slink elegantly off the stage and the audience erupts into catcalls. Flash: it is Thevenot's dream, or is it Senechal's? Never mind. They're next at the *real* party. Lively guests. The colonel's wife is garrulous and in her way gracious. But the colonel and guests oppress the ambassador, who then pulls a pistol and....And whose dream is that? Next scene.

The story, to repeat, is slight. The message is reed-thin, though insistent: these people are inane, they are cooly vicious, they are pampered and reactionary and ultimately politically Right, that is, wrong. There lies Bunuel's intent, his long-time again and again repeated intent: the evisceration of that class and that locale along the political spectrum which he detests. He's stacked nearly all the cards against himself, and still wins. We see no starving masses; the terrorista is a gorgeous clod, better suited for the bordello than the barrio; our rich six do not brutalize their servants (though Thevenot calls in the ambassador's driver, offers him a martini, watches the servant gulp it down, tells him he may go, and then makes his point: the lower classes are obviously unimprovable, witness the way the fellow misuses a martini!). In short, Bunuel stands miles above the usual propaganda artist, contrasting his enemies not with his chosen people, the unseen masses, but with his enemies' own pretensions. It is an ever so much more potent way to drive home a lesson, and should serve as a model for the genre. *The Ruling Class* attempts something similar, but its makers couldn't resist the temptation to show at least some of the actual effects (or perceived effects) of irresponsible wealth on those less favored. But *The Discreet Charm* retains its reserve to the end, to yet another shot of the six friends walking briskly along that country road.

Bunuel's haut bourgeoisie are in his eyes the scum of the earth, albeit so polite, so gay, so charming. It is a notion deserving cinema treatment, as does one that Bunuel will not assay: the masses as lumpish and gross, philistinely ignorant. Were Bunuel's treatment in this film not so entirely successful, and his now somewhat modulated political thing not so familiar, one might be tempted to rail against his manifest bias. With regard to politicized films, we might paraphrase Wilde: there's no such thing as a moral or an immoral film; films are well-done, or badly done. We take *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* on its own terms, as Luis Bunuel's possibly final statement (he's 72) of a particular world view. Stripped of the message it is elegantly whipped froth; permeated by his thoughts it is satiny smooth and substantial, wrong-minded because incomplete and loaded, but a splendid movie as movie.

David Brudnoy

Book Review:

The Political Culture of the United States

by Donald Devine
Little-Brown, $7.95

There are several contentions which make up the central purpose of *The Political Culture of the United States* by Donald Devine, a political science professor at the University of Maryland. Complexly interwoven are mutually dependent theses about the history and vitality of America's political culture. To lay the ground for an empirical review of our cultural milieu we are informed that: "culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based on symbols; and is an abstraction from behavior and the products of behavior."

The thesis is that the acceptance of certain political values is essential, without resort to substantial coercion, for "regime maintenance." In simple terms, the population must accept certain political notions which conform with political reality so that the regime does not topple under the impact of internalized stress. It is self-evident that a fundamental and institutional consensus, at least during the formative term of a democratic tradition, be present. Failing that, the United States would be undifferentiated from Latin America and its momentary governments. But we are blessed; we were bequeathed sound republican institutions.

The question under empirical observation is whether the population continues to believe, in consensual proportions, in those sound republican institutions which Devine instructs are the political products of the "Lockean liberal tradition." That tradition is defined as political attitudes which favor liberty over security, private over public property, personal achievement, the legislative over the executive, and a metaphysical foundation to the order of things. It is not the purpose of this review to question whether the favored attitudes can be properly described as Lockean or not.

Rather I wish to raise certain fundamental questions, not regarding the accuracy of Devine's findings, but regarding Devine's view of the American tradition or condition. There is considerable evidence to justify this questioning. There should be little argument with the beliefs Devine selects for review; the matter which should be considered is whether the tradition as defined tells the whole story. I am afraid that the tradition defined reflects a nineteenth century interpretive revision essentially along economic and "Millian" lines of the nature of the Western tradition in the politics of the American experience. Moreover, the revision has caused considerable harm to the health of our political institutions, for we have been led to an over-emphasis on political freedom and an under-emphasis (perhaps no emphasis at all) on personal duty and apolitical things.

When modern political and economic institutions emerged around the sixteenth century, they came upon the firm moral foundation of medieval experience. The early America was founded on basic religious and moral notions, even though Adam Smith was the fad of the day.

Author's Query

I am studying the life of the not-yet-famous futuristic composer Smyrn Yaffe-Ayrdale, III of Cloverdale, Iowa. I would be grateful if anyone could send me a score to his second trio for whistle, siren, and leg of lamb. I may be reached at my teacher's house in Ithaca, New York. My name is John Dignes.

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While Locke may have been quoted by certain political leaders, people lived by certain inherited norms not necessarily consistent with either the new economics or politics. I do not mean to single out Locke as *the*, or even *a* subservice influence, but to make the point that people, leaders and followers alike, may say one thing, but do something entirely different. In other words, we must analyze the event, more than the rhetoric.

This is what I see to be the central problem with the thesis as Devine has apparently developed it. While not presently undertaking a review of the strengths of our political culture — and I am convinced there are some, as Devine most assuredly is convinced there are many — I do question the effectiveness and soundness of an analysis of the population's attitudes on certain selected beliefs. The empirical analysis of actions by modern Americans might produce an entirely different picture regarding the health of this nation's politics. Politics is, however, derivative, and one who would analyze its condition must also go to the primary sources, moral conviction and cultural habit.

There are also other problems which go to the heart of the method. At any certain time in history, especially in a day when empty notions are fed to the young through public schooling and electronic media, all too often there are highly generalized myths which only the most outrageous among us would not support, like apple pie, for instance. In analyzing polls, these myths often appear undifferentiated from the society's basic and real symbols, moral and political. Further, certain of these myths as publicly expressed have a tendency to change from day to day. For instance, polls cited by Devine regarding popular attitudes toward the "openness" of government are flatly contradicted by Louis Harris' poll published in June 19, 1972. According to Harris, the American population is alienated from both itself and its government. Yet these results turned up after repeated articulation by the "two Georges" and the chic media.

This is not to say that there is not value in empirical public opinion analysis. To the contrary, it is a helpful device, albeit incomplete. It is *a* word, not *the* word. It is secondary and supportive of sound analysis of institutions, actions, and conditions. It is dangerous to contend that a general political hypothesis can be either accepted or rejected on the basis of opinion data, which is at best less than reliable.

Before making a final point regarding the book's stated thesis, I should like to digress to Devine's contention, strongly stated outside the pages of this book, that the political problems now faced by the United States are essentially problems with our elite. Those who are in positions of power and authority, public or private, whether by achievement or inheritance, are out of step with the American people. It is within this elite that America's problems lie, although not necessarily exclusive to them.

Certainly no one could reasonably contend otherwise. Except that is only half the story. America's elite are our political and moral leaders. It does no good to contend that the body is healthy if the brain has become addled. Health among the elite and the body politic is essential.

To admit that America's leadership is sick, as it is, is to say that America is floundering. Our religious institutions are in decay, to the point that a recent youth crusade for Christ looked more like a fascist rally than a gathering of young people seeking theological understanding and moral guidance. Our political leaders are either so pragmatic as to be worthless or they are committed to aiding the forces of disintegration. Business has come to be dominated by manager-bureaucrats whose lack of creativity is considered a virtue and whose methods of control are frustrating and boring. The academy whose commitment is supposed to be to quality has become vulgar and political to the point that the SDSers have a point, even if their suggestions were an extension and magnification of the problem.

Restated, there are deep problems amongst America's elite. As we indict

our elite, we must also indict our future in-as-much as today's elite bequeath that future. This may well be the case even though the nation's non-elite are healthy in attitudes and actions, as Devine demonstrates. No doubt there would be reason for greater hope if just the reverse were true. The mission of educating the elite would seem to be infinitely more difficult. Is it not definitionally impossible for the non-elite to be missionaries for the elite?

There is, of course, the chance that through flexibility and social mobility, today's elite will be replaced. The questions are 1) whether our overly-bureaucratized society is as mobile as it once was; 2) whether the new elite will come about because it has rejected current trends or because it has adopted and perfected them.

There are signs of promise. But much depends on a young and dedicated counter-elite pursuing principle as vigorously as most of our politicians pursue power, seeing their earthly mission as one in part committed to changing the course of events.

Finally, the point must be made that much of what America supports (e.g., federalism, legislative superiority, local option, constitutional government) no longer exists. Devine has convinced me that Americans support these basic symbols of American politics. He has also convinced me that I should question the integrity of those institutions till favored. Consider the conditions of federalism.

Those reviewing the "political culture of the United States" sociologically can demonstrate that the American body politic enthusiastically supports federalism. However, it can also be demonstrated that there is no longer any such thing. America's division of powers between local (state) and national authorities is today more fiction than fact. To be sure, there are some exceptions. Under today's federalism there can be no lingerers, which is to say there is no federalism. The collapse of federated responsibility is not totally a matter of a federal power grab. The states, very often for utilitarian political motives, beg the national government to do this or that for them. In the face of an emergency the governors from Virginia to New York organized a meeting after the June floods to figure out what they could do to get federal assistance quicker than would normally be expected. In politics and finance, state welfare has gotten out of control, and governors are unwilling to turn off the spigot or raise taxes, so they actively seek to have the Big Fed come to the rescue. The final chapter on federalism will be written (it is half so already, thanks to grants-in-aid) when revenue sharing turns the states into the mere administrative agencies they will become when money flows from Washington. Federalism died, not because it wasn't a good idea or one which did not work well. It died because our intellectual and political elite determined it expendable for political purposes.

And yet the American public supports federalism? Well, they support the tradition. So would Birch Bayh. But substantively there is no federalism, and herein lies the real problem with empirical, opinion-oriented analysis. It is more important to study whether the opinion is correct, not simply whether it exists. It is more important to study the health of the institution, its values and deficiencies. And it is more important that we know what is, not what some think conditions are.

The central thesis of *The Political Culture of the United States* is that the American people support the "Lockean liberal" tradition, as Devine defines it. They probably do. But in the world of politics, power, and policy I don't think it matters all that much.

Dan Joy

Author's Query

I am doing work in the Russian Archives and would appreciate any reader sending me a small chisel, an ax, and several sticks of dynamite.

Ivan Rasppasppasp, Ph. D.
Russian Archives
Moscow, U.S.S.R. 47302

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"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad"– Euripides

Current Wisdom

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

The illustrious president of Yale University, Dr. Kingman Brewster, magisterially announces the needs of his children:

As we approach the bicentennial of the Republic, perhaps what we need most for 1976 is a resounding Declaration of *International Interdependence*. Maybe by 1987 we could then celebrate the two hundredth year of the Constitution of the United States with at least the beginning of global arrangements and institutions to safeguard the common defense and the general welfare of humanity everywhere. Then we could rediscover the sense of purpose, and once more know the satisfaction, of making them into a nation. We, in our turn, might save the peoples of nations by making them into a world community capable of survival.

—*Foreign Affairs*

ETHNIC AWARENESS

From Time Magazine, journalism's equivalent to the dime store, comes word of yet another delirious episode in the fight against racism. Another color barrier falls:

Previous winners of the "Black Man of the Year Award" have been Chicago Bears running back Gale Sayers and comedian Dick Gregory. The award presented by Holy Angels' parish in a black area of Chicago's South Side honors outstanding contributions to the race. The current Black Man of the Month: George O'Hare, a Sears, Roebuck executive who was awarded the plaque for his work with the late Martin Luther King, Jr. in Chicago and his efforts to improve education and other conditions in the city's ghettos. The fact that O'Hare is white did not trouble the parish. Said Pastor George Clements: "Blackness is a way of life, not merely a skin color."

— *Time*

QUESTION GIRL

Responding to the metaphysical inquiry "What's your idea of a Romantic Evening?" Miss Cheryl Kelton, Indiana University student, provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind of a cosmopolitan girl:

It's like when you go out to eat. I live in Illinois and there's this one restaurant where it's all candlelight and it's just gorgeous. There's this plush carpeting, too. Then after dinner you can go to a concert and then to a few bars after that, and then you go back to the room. This is going to sound funny, but then you have anchovies and crackers and wine.

— *Bloomington Courier-Tribune*

RAW FLESH

Shocking revelations by the New England Anti-Vivisection Society concerning the brutalization of American school children. Come home, America!

Both boys and girls in elementary schools receive scientific assignments in their biology classes that frequently entail vivisection of live frogs, mice, and even rabbits, who writhe under the inept scalpels wielded by childish hands.

It is a fact that less than one percent of the children performing these operations will ever enter medical school. Why then, must the overwhelming majority of young students be subjected to this cruel strain on their conscience?

More important, the cultivation of callous indifference to suffering can be emotionally upsetting to the young mind by participating in the harming or killing of God's lesser creatures. Experiments which result in considerable pain foster an improper regard for animal life and an unbalanced view of biology in the immature mind.

A proper regard for *all* lesser animals is instinctive in a young child and the teaching of abnormal conditions before the student has a sound grasp of normal physiology is against common sense and does not enhance scientific education.

—*New York Times*

MINISTER DOWN THE STREET

The indefatigable Arthur Schlesinger, M.A., brings us more Good News about the unbelievable George McGovern:

McGovern is simply not a believable radical, nor do voters, once exposed to him, perceive him as a menace to society. He comes on not as a bomb thrower, but as an old-fashioned American idealist of a traditional sort — the minister down the street or the teacher across the block; moreover, as a practical idealist who can pilot bombers, win Distinguished Flying Crosses, build party organizations, distribute farm surpluses abroad and win elections.

—*The New York Times Magazine*

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Using the esoteric rhetoric of the New Democratic Party, Senator Kennedy addresses Mexican-Americans, and reveals the villainy afoot at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue:

Assailing President Nixon, Senator Kennedy said that Mr. Nixon "took pride in eating grapes" and ordered enough lettuce to feed the army for two years. "We know where he stands."

— *Associated Press*

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

In a recent interview, television's old master, Chet Huntley, fretted about how his medium had become "overly obsessed with the negative story — with tragedy, despair, and failure." We need to talk about what is right with America — so he proceeded to catalogue some of the rosier things he sees in the Republic. Ah, the intellectuals of the air waves!

The anxieties are eating away at us. We're not the self-confident nation we were after World War II. This damn war has demonstrated to us that we can't have our way, even militarily, all the time. We're going to have to bite the bullet and admit that we were virtually defeated.

The cities are getting worse and people are in despair over it.

Congress just has to reform itself or people are going to turn away in disgust.

A lot of people are in despair about our environment. I don't think there's any reason to be. If we spend the money we can clean this country up.

Many of the nation's best plans have become distorted. Welfare is a noble concept but suddenly the nation has found it is a way of life for several millions of persons.

The labor movement that was once a bright and noble concept forty years ago is a disappointment. It seems to me a lot of the organized leadership is pretty bad.

We're tragically short of outstanding political leadership right now. I'm confident that it will come along, but for some strange reason, we haven't had it recently.

—*The Chicago Daily News*

VARIETIES OF HISTORY

Noted historian, Tom Seligson, testifies to the stupendous achievements of our pop youth, the brightest generation since Attila's:

And as James Dean represented the young of the fifties with his unarticulated lack of ease and his alienation, Manson and Sirhan, with their social bitterness and criminal rebellion, signify the mood of the contemporary youth.

— *Evergreen Review*

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

(continued from page 2)

an eighth grade teacher of earth sciences. Mr. Acanfora is a militant gay. And in Memphis the police are spreading a rumor that a homosexual has raped seventeen male students. In such a climate of fear it comes as good news that a group calling itself the Citizens for Kennedy Committee has begun a drive for the 1976 Election of the Lion of Massachusetts.

● Though the press hardly noted it, peace groups scheduled their annual demonstrations for an immediate culmination of the war on November 18. The crowds were small but serious and high minded, many were beautifully dressed. Two student demonstrators died of gun shot wounds at Southern University igniting small demonstrations throughout the country. At the University of California at Berkeley one protestor ate a live chicken and spread the feathers in front of an army recruiting office.

● On November 17 Argentina celebrated the second coming of Juan Peron. While in Manila, where President Marcos has stated that he imposed martial law only after receiving instructions from God, about 100 masseuses demonstrated against governmental repression. Back in the States people talked of "Nixon Prosperity," and in the middle of the month the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 1000 for the first time in history. George Romney left HUD, and in Brazil a shantytown was buried under an avalanche of garbage from the city dump. American tourists were cheered when they heard that in Italy one in every ten young women is a prostitute. In Los Gatos, California a sixty-eight year-old priest was stabbed to death while hearing confessions. And radio station KYXI of Milwaukee interrupted its early morning broadcast while disc jockey David Roberts hanged himself. A United States Court of Appeals removed contempt charges from the heads of the remaining Chicago Seven; Willy Brandt's coalition won a comfortable majority in the West German elections. And Honduras' General Oswaldo Lopez Arellano established a Pan American record by completing a bloodless coup so rapidly that it caused an "only brief interruption in international telephone service."

● All in all it was not much of a month. The President spent much of his time in Camp David. Senator McGovern's supporters slept behind locked doors expecting a "call in the night." The Miami Dolphins continued their unbeaten string. There will be no New Frontiers, no New American Revolutions, no ambrosia for the ideologues and the fabulists. It is the Year of the Running Back.

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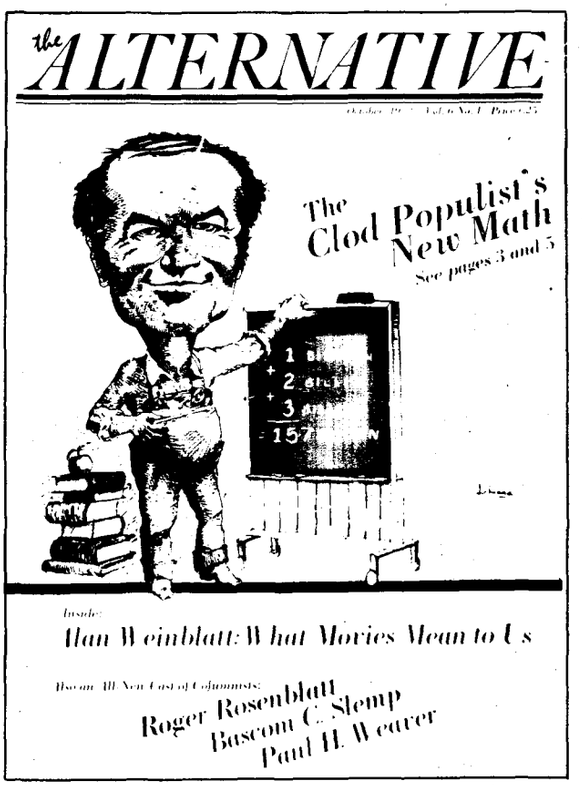

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